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14. ABSTRACT  This study is one component of the Special Operations Forces (SOF) Language and Culture Needs Assessment Project. The larger study consisted of 23 focus groups conducted across the SOF community and an issue-oriented web-based survey. This report examined SOF operators' and leaders' perceptions of the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT). Overall, results of this study indicate a misalignment between testing and SOF operators' language-related mission needs. Survey and focus group results indicated that SOF leaders do not fully support the use of the DLPT for language proficiency testing in the SOF community for two main reasons. First, SOF operators and leaders indicated that the DLPT does not assess language proficiency skills needed for SOF missions and believe instead that speaking is the most relevant language skill for their missions. Second, almost half of SOF operators reported experiencing scheduling and technical problems during DLPT testing. Combining past research with the current study, it is evident that the DLPT does not meet the testing needs of the SOF community. USSOCOM and SOF component leadership should take steps to address these concerns to better align foreign language proficiency testing with the needs of the SOF community.					
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# **Special Operations Forces Language and Culture Needs Assessment: Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT)**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Moderator: “...so the DLPT tests listening and reading. Is that the appropriate test for what you do on the job?”

Participant 1: “No.”

Participant 2: “No.”

Participant 3: “No, not at all.”

19<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (SFG) Focus Group

This report examines perceptions of the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) in the Special Operations Forces (SOF) community. Specifically, this report documents SOF leader support of DLPT language testing, SOF operator DLPT testing experiences, and SOF operator and leader views of the DLPT. Overall, this report highlights three main concerns that the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and SOF component leadership should address as appropriate:

- Responses indicate that SOF leaders do not fully support the use of the DLPT for language proficiency testing in the SOF community. It is important to determine whether this lack of support is specific to the DLPT because it lacks mission relevance, or whether these findings reflect a lack of support for language testing in general. A general lack of support (i.e., not DLPT specific) could have implications for language-specific mission readiness. USSOCOM should assess support for language testing in the future once the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) has been the test of record for language proficiency for a few years. Since SOF personnel perceive the OPI as more job relevant<sup>1</sup>, SOF community support for the language testing process should improve.
- Almost half of SOF operators reported experiencing scheduling and technical problems during DLPT testing. Issues with test availability/scheduling, test delivery and the testing environment are serious and may affect the reliability and validity of DLPT scores and, therefore, the number of SOF personnel meeting language testing requirements.
- SOF operators and leaders indicated that the DLPT does not assess the language proficiency skills needed for missions. SOF leaders and operators indicate speaking is the most relevant language skill for their missions.<sup>2</sup> This is an issue of alignment of testing with needed mission capability – the DLPT lacks alignment with the skills required on SOF missions and, therefore, may interfere with development of needed skills.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Oral Proficiency Interview* (Technical Report #2010011006) for additional findings related to SOF operator and leader reactions to USSOCOM’s recent standard change.

<sup>2</sup> *Inside AOR Use of Language* (Technical Report #2010011010) and *Outside AOR Use of Language* (Technical Report #2010011011).

These criticisms have not been resolved with newer versions of the DLPT as SOF operators and leaders still react negatively to the DLPT5 (e.g., indicated that the test is too difficult and is not a valid assessment). Therefore, the findings presented in this report support the move away from using the DLPT as the test of record for language proficiency in the SOF community.

### *SOF Leader Support for DLPT Testing*

As part of their leadership role, SOF leaders should monitor whether SOF operators fulfill USSOCOM's language testing requirement and encourage them to do so.<sup>3</sup> At the time of the survey, the test of record was the DLPT. Of SOF leaders in units that require personnel to take the DLPT and who could comment on DLPT testing ( $n = 371$ ), 51% ( $n = 183$ ) indicated their units fell below USSOCOM's requirement of more than 80% of unit personnel meeting language testing requirements. Therefore, approximately half of SOF units did not meet USSOCOM's standard and should be following mandated language training programs.<sup>4</sup>

Low percentages of SOF units meeting testing requirements may be due to the large portions of SOF leaders who reported not paying attention to DLPT scores, not believing DLPT ratings are important, and not encouraging SOF operators to stay up-to-date on language testing or do well on the DLPT. For example, most SOF leaders reported that the DLPT was *not related* or only *slightly related* to what SOF operators do on the job and many SOF leaders commented that DLPT content is unrelated to the mission, job, or military. These results show a lack of command support for DLPT language testing, which was also found in the *2004 SOF Language Transformation Needs Assessment* (Surface, Poncheri, Lemmond & Shetye, 2005).<sup>5</sup> This lack of support is likely related to the DLPT's lack of relevance for the SOF operator (Surface, Poncheri, Lemmond & Shetye, 2005).

### *SOF Operator Experiences with the DLPT*

Since many SOF operators reported taking the DLPT (93%,  $n = 1,086$ ), it is important to identify whether they encounter problems during testing and, if so, the types of problems experienced. During their most recent DLPT, 44% ( $n = 468$ ) of SOF operators reported experiencing problems. The most commonly reported problems included computer/technical issues (24%,  $n = 257$ ) and test scheduling delays (22%,  $n = 235$ ).

*"Computer would freeze up during test."*

SOF Operator, 95<sup>th</sup> CA Bde

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<sup>3</sup> USSOCOM recently changed their foreign language testing requirement to reflect the importance of speaking and listening skills (as measured by a two-skill OPI). However, at the time of this survey, many respondents reported being from units that required the DLPT for language testing.

<sup>4</sup> However, these are only SOF leader estimates rather than actual counts. If there is a discrepancy between these estimates and actual counts, the discrepancy suggests that SOF leaders are not paying close attention to SOF operator language test scores.

<sup>5</sup> See *Command Support for Language: Grading the Chain of Command* Technical Report #2010011006 for additional findings related to command support for language testing.

*“LAST 4 SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS WERE CANCELED AND CURRENT “RE-SCHEDULED” APPOINTMENT WAS FOR A DATE 8 WEEKS OUT”*

SOF Operator, 5<sup>th</sup> SFG

Computer/technical issues must be addressed since they may have a negative impact on performance, which could misrepresent SOF proficiency and force capability estimates. Specifically, technical issues can impact the reliability and validity of test scores and, in extreme cases, the validity as well. Test scheduling delays should also be addressed as they may affect SOF operators’ ability to stay up-to-date on their language testing requirement. Additional issues that were less frequently mentioned included problems accessing testing centers, delays or problems receiving feedback, and disruptions while testing.

*“too many people in test area....most of them are the test takers...should limit the amount of people.”*

SOF Operator, 95<sup>th</sup> CA Bde

Although outside the direct control of SOF, SOF leaders can raise these issues with those who have propensity and oversight for testing and test delivery.

#### *Perceptions of DLPT Accuracy and Job-relatedness*

*“I think the first thing needs to be addressed is the DLPT, [...] It does not meet our needs whatsoever. ”*

Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) Focus Group

Recently, USSOCOM changed its test of record for language proficiency from the DLPT (reading and listening) to the two-skill OPI. Findings support this change as many SOF operators and leaders indicated that the DLPT neither relates to their jobs nor accurately assesses language proficiency.

*“...even the best students, who were able to communicate clearly in Russian, did not achieve a high score on the DLPT”*

SOF Operator, 4<sup>th</sup> MISG

Therefore, the move away from testing on the DLPT to OPI testing supports USSOCOM’s goals of emphasizing mission-related language skills.<sup>6</sup>

Perceptions of DLPT accuracy have not improved with the DLPT5. In fact, perceptions have gotten more negative as SOF operators who last tested on the DLPT IV viewed the DLPT as slightly more accurate than those who last took the DLPT5.

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<sup>6</sup> See *Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI; Technical Report #2010011016)* for more information on SOF operator and leader perspectives on the standard change.

*“... the DLPT V is a test designed for DLI-trained linguists and interpreters...not Special Forces operators. It is entirely too unrelated to the conversations/situations that an operator will typically encounter.”*

SOF Operator, 7<sup>th</sup> SFG

Additionally, findings mirror those found during the 2004 *SOF Language Transformation Needs Assessment* (Surface, Poncheri, Lemmond & Shetye, 2005). When responding to that survey, SOF operators and leaders indicated that the DLPT did not accurately measure language proficiency or how operators use language on missions. Moreover, recent research within the SOF community<sup>7</sup> has indicated that DLPT listening is not an effective proxy for speaking proficiency, which is the desired skill for most SOF. Combining past research with the current study, it is evident that the DLPT does not meet the testing needs of the SOF community and does not facilitate the alignment of capability with mission requirements. However, many in SOF will still take the DLPT to qualify for Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB), make this problematic for the SOF community and the goal of developing mission-relevant foreign language capability. USSOCOM and SOF component leadership should take steps to address these concerns to better align foreign language proficiency testing with the needs of the SOF community.

See Appendix A for details on the 2009 *SOF LCNA Project*. For questions or more information about the SOFLO and this project, please contact Mr. Jack Donnelly ([john.donnelly@socom.mil](mailto:john.donnelly@socom.mil)). For specific questions related to data collection or reports associated with this project, please contact Dr. Eric A. Surface ([esurface@swa-consulting.com](mailto:esurface@swa-consulting.com)) or Dr. Reanna Poncheri Harman ([rpharman@swa-consulting.com](mailto:rpharman@swa-consulting.com)) with SWA Consulting Inc.

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<sup>7</sup> *Using the DLPT as a Proxy for the OPI: Are Reading and Non-Participatory Listening Scores a Substitute for Direct Assessment of Speaking Proficiency?* (Technical Report #2010011015)

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## SECTION I: REPORT AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

### ***Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) Report Purpose***

Annual language proficiency testing has a central role in monitoring and maintain language capability in the military in general and, specifically, in the Special Operations Forces (SOF) community. The United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) requires SOF personnel to demonstrate they have maintained their language skills through annual proficiency testing, which provides USSOCOM and Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO) information on current SOF language capabilities. Unit recently, the test of record has been the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) for SOF. Since most SOF personnel have historically taken the DLPT and may still take the DLPT to fulfill their annual language testing requirement and qualify for proficiency pay, their experiences with and perceptions of the test need to be examined.<sup>8</sup> This report examines SOF leader support of language testing (Section II), SOF operator DLPT testing experiences (Section III), and SOF operator and leader perceptions of the DLPT's job-relatedness and accuracy (Section IV). Appendix A details the *2009 SOF LCNA Project*, and Appendix B discusses the report methodology. Appendices C through H provides findings by component and job (e.g., SOF operator, SOF leader, MI Linguists attached to a SOF unit) while Appendix I provides detailed comment code results. Appendix J provides all comment codes used in the report.

### **LCNA Project Purpose**

The Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO) commissioned the *2009 SOF LCNA Project* to gain insights on language and culture capability and issues across the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). The goal of this organizational-level needs assessment is to inform strategy and policy to ensure SOF personnel have the language and culture skills needed to conduct their missions effectively. Data were collected between March and November 2009 from personnel in the SOF community, including operators and leaders. Findings, gathered via focus groups and a web-based survey, will be presented in a series of reports divided into three tiers. The specific reports in each of these tiers will be determined and contracted by the SOFLO. *Tier I* reports focus on specific, limited issues (e.g., *Inside AOR Use of Language*). *Tier II* reports integrate and present the most important findings across related *Tier I* reports (e.g., *Use of Language and Culture on Deployment*) while including additional data and analysis on the topic. One *Tier III* report presents the most important findings, implications, and recommendations across all topics explored in this project. The remaining *Tier III* reports present findings for specific SOF organizations [e.g., Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), Special Forces (SF) Command]. Two foundational reports document the methodology and participants associated with this project. Original report topics were determined by the SOFLO.

### **Relationship of Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) to the LCNA Project**

*Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT)* is a *Tier I* report that will be integrated with two other *Tier I* reports, *Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)* and *Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB): Perspectives from the Field*, into a *Tier II* report, *Testing/Metrics* (see Appendix A for the planned report structure).

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<sup>8</sup> The other test sometimes taken to fulfill the annual requirement, the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), is evaluated in a separate report [see *Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)*, Technical Report #2010011016].



## SECTION II: SOF LEADER SUPPORT FOR DLPT TESTING

This section investigates SOF leaders' support for DLPT language testing through their reported attitudes and behaviors. While USSOCOM recently changed their test of record for language proficiency to the OPI, some SOF operators still tested on the DLPT at the time of this survey and likely still continue to test on the DLPT to qualify for the proficiency bonus. This section documents the extent to which SOF leaders in units that required SOF operators to test on the DLPT support language testing and, by extension, development of language proficiency in their units.

### Research Questions

- How many SOF leaders report that personnel in their unit are required to take the DLPT?
- According to SOF leaders in units that require SOF operators to test on the DLPT:
  - What percentage of SOF operators in their units that are up-to-date on language testing requirements?
  - How often do SOF leaders in units that require DLPT testing encourage SOF operators in their units to stay up-to-date on their language testing requirement?
- How often are SOF leaders encouraging SOF operators to study and do well on the DLPT?
- How many SOF leaders pay attention to SOF operators' DLPT ratings?
- How important are SOF operators' DLPT ratings to SOF leaders?

### Main Findings

SOF leader reports of their attitudes and behaviors suggest they do not fully support DLPT language testing. Eighty-nine percent ( $n = 679$ ) of SOF leaders indicated that personnel in their unit were required to take the DLPT (Figure 1, p. 9). However, only 49% ( $n = 371$ ) were in a position to comment on their SOF operators' DLPT testing (Figure 1, p. 9). Moreover, although 74% ( $n = 268$ ) reported they *often* or *very often* encourage their unit's SOF operators to stay up-to-date on the language testing requirement (Figure 2, p. 10), 51% ( $n = 183$ ) of SOF leaders reported that less than 80% of SOF operators in their units were up-to-date on their language testing requirement (Figure 3, p. 10). USSOCOM policy stipulates that components with less than 80% of their personnel meeting the language testing requirement are required to implement mandated training hours and retest upon completion of training (USSOCOM M 350-8, 2009). This suggests that a large number of units may need mandated training.<sup>9</sup>

Additionally, SOF leaders in a position to comment on their unit's DLPT ratings, 61% ( $n = 228$ ) reported that DLPT ratings are *not important* or *moderately important* to them (Figure 4, p. 11). Furthermore, 74% ( $n = 273$ ) of SOF leaders reported they pay attention to SOF operator DLPT ratings (Figure 5, p. 11) and 53% ( $n = 195$ ) reported they *often* or *very often* encourage their unit's SOF operators to study and do well on the DLPT (Figure 6, p. 12). While USSOCOM has recently changed its test of record from the DLPT to the OPI, findings could indicate that SOF leaders may not fully support language testing in general.

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<sup>9</sup> These are SOF leader estimates rather than actual counts. If there is a discrepancy between these estimates and actual counts, the discrepancy suggests that SOF leaders are not paying close attention to SOF operator language test scores.

## Detailed Findings

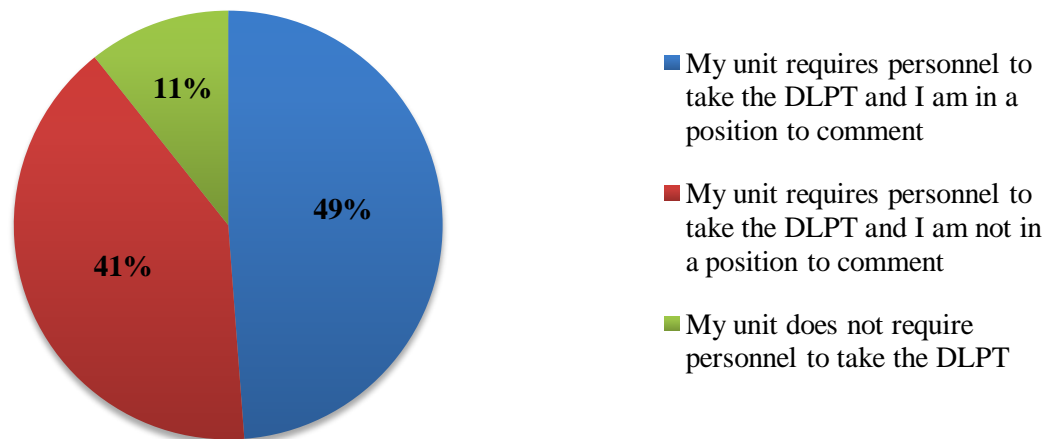
### *SOF Leader Familiarity with DLPT Testing*

While most SOF leaders (89%,  $n = 679$ ) reported that personnel in their unit were required to take the DLPT, only 49% ( $n = 371$ ) were in a position to comment on DLPT testing (Figure 1, p. 9). This report's remaining sections only include these SOF leaders.

### *SOF Leader Perspectives on Unit Language Testing Status*

Eighty-nine percent ( $n = 679$ ) of SOF leaders were in units that required personnel to take the DLPT for language proficiency testing (Figure 1, p. 9). However, only 49% ( $n = 371$ ) were in a position to comment on DLPT testing (Figure 1, p. 9). Even though 75% ( $n = 268$ ) of those SOF leaders reported they *often* or *very often* encourage their unit's SOF operators to stay up-to-date on the language testing requirement (Figure 2, p. 10), 51% ( $n = 183$ ) reported that less than 80% of their unit's SOF operators were up-to-date on their language testing requirement (Figure 3, p. 10).<sup>10</sup> USSOCOM policy stipulates that components with less than 80% of their personnel meeting the language testing requirement are required to implement mandated training hours and retest upon completion of training (USSOCOM M 350-8, 2009). This suggests that a large number of units may need mandated training.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 1. SOF leader perspective on unit DLPT testing requirements

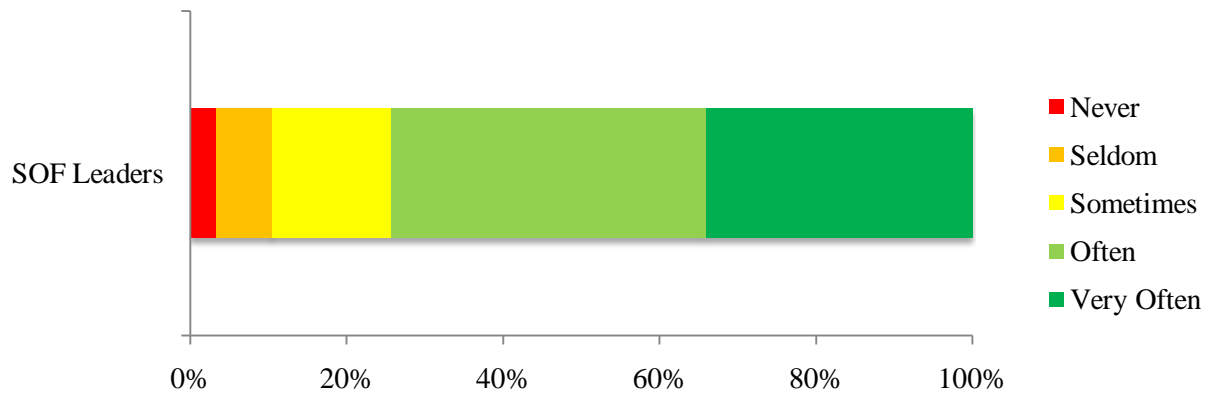


Note. SOF Leaders:  $n = 760$ .

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix C for results by component and Army SOF type.

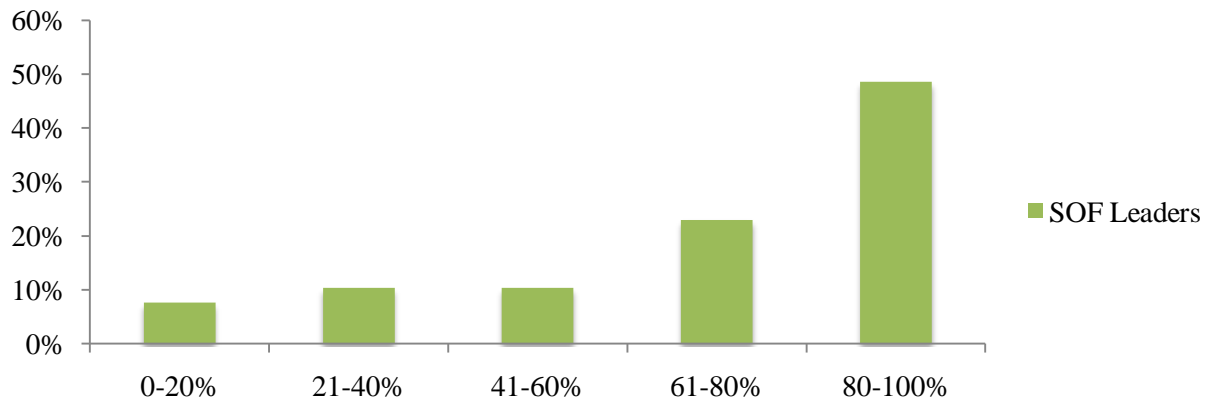
<sup>11</sup> These are SOF leader estimates rather than actual counts. If there is a discrepancy between these estimates and actual counts, the discrepancy suggests that SOF leaders are not paying close attention to SOF operator language test scores.

Figure 2. Encouragement of SOF operators to stay up-to-date on the language testing requirement



Note. SOF Leaders:  $n = 361$ . See Appendix C for additional results.

Figure 3. Estimated percentage of SOF operators up-to-date on language testing requirement



Note. SOF Leaders:  $n = 365$ ; CLPMs:  $n = 10$ . See Appendix C for additional results.

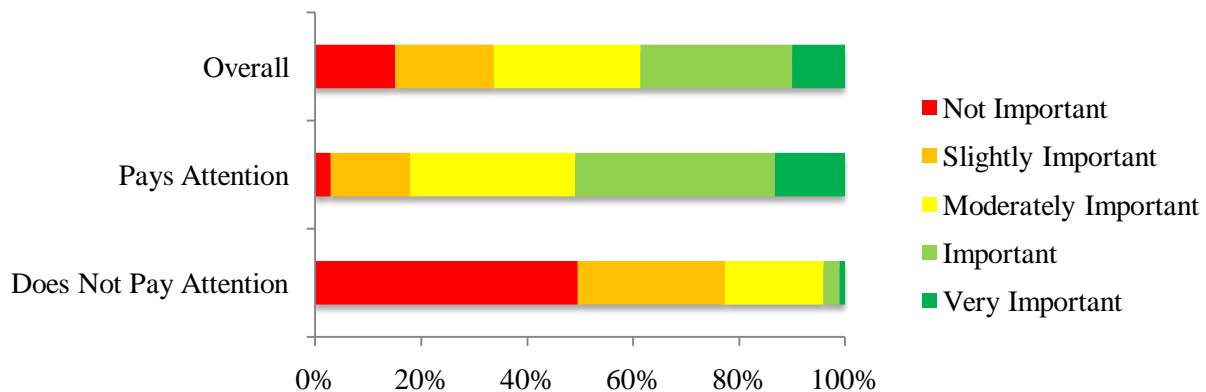
### *SOF Leader Support of DLPT Language Testing*

Seventy-five percent of SOF leaders ( $n = 268$ ) reported they *often* or *very often* encourage their unit's SOF operators to stay up-to-date on the language testing requirement (Figure 2, p. 10). While SOF leaders support their SOF operators in meeting USSOCOM's testing requirement, findings suggest they do not fully support DLPT language testing.<sup>12</sup> Only 39% ( $n = 143$ ) reported that DLPT ratings are *important* or *very important* to them (Figure 4, p. 11). Moreover, 74% ( $n = 273$ ) of SOF leaders reported they pay attention to SOF operator DLPT ratings (Figure 5, p. 11) and 53% ( $n = 195$ ) reported they *often* or *very often* encourage their unit's SOF operators to study and do well on the DLPT (Figure 6, p. 12). This suggests that while SOF leaders often encourage SOF operators to stay up-to-date on their DLPT language testing requirements, and thus meet USSOCOM's requirements for mission readiness, they themselves do not believe language is important for SOF mission success.

<sup>12</sup> See *Command Support for Language: Grading the Chain of Command* [Technical Report #2010011006] for more information on SOF leader support for meeting mission-related language requirements.

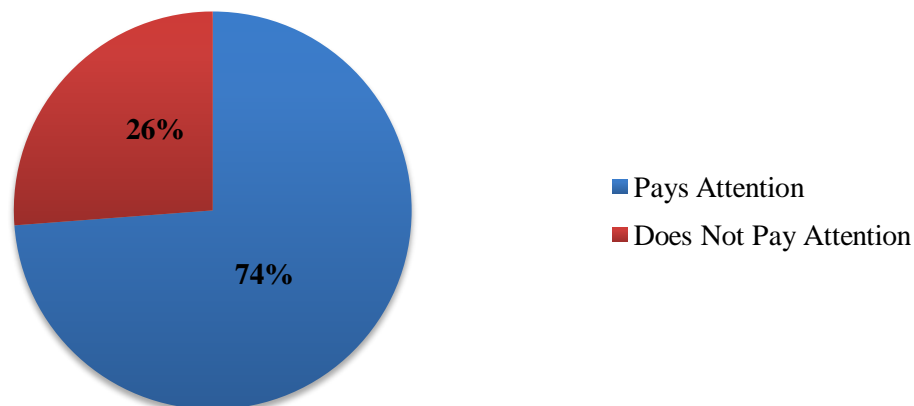
SOF leaders who pay attention indicated that SOF operator DLPT ratings are more important ( $M = 3.4$ ) than SOF leaders who reported not paying attention ( $M = 1.8$ ; Figure 4, p. 11). SOF leaders who pay attention also indicated they more often encouraged SOF operators to study and do well on the DLPT ( $M = 3.7$ ) than SOF leaders who reported not paying attention ( $M = 2.4$ ; Figure 6, p. 12). In addition, SOF leaders who reported that DLPT ratings are more important to them also reported they more often encouraged their SOF operators to study and do well on the test ( $r = 0.55, p < .01$ ).

Figure 4. Importance of DLPT ratings to SOF leaders



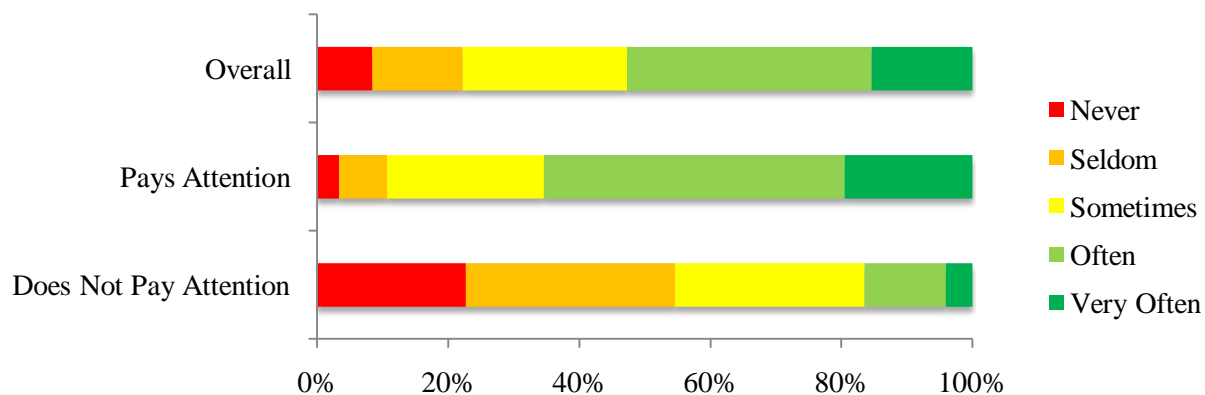
Note. Pays Attention = SOF leaders who indicated they pay attention to SOF operators' DLPT ratings; Does not Pay Attention = SOF leaders who indicated they do not pay attention to SOF operators' DLPT ratings. Overall:  $n = 371$ ; Pays Attention:  $n = 273$ ; Does not Pay Attention:  $n = 97$ .

Figure 5. SOF leader attention to SOF operator DLPT ratings



Note. SOF Leaders:  $n = 370$ .

Figure 6. SOF leader encouragement to study and do well on the DLPT



Note. Pays Attention = SOF leaders who indicated they pay attention to SOF operators' DLPT ratings, Does not Pay Attention = SOF leaders who indicated they do not pay attention to SOF operators' DLPT ratings. Overall:  $n = 370$ ; Pays Attention:  $n = 272$ ; Does not Pay Attention:  $n = 97$ .

### SECTION III: SOF OPERATOR EXPERIENCES WITH THE DLPT

This section reports the DLPT testing history of SOF operators who completed the survey. In addition, this section identifies problems SOF operators experienced during DLPT testing so they can be communicated to the Defense Language Institute (DLI), the testing authorities for Department of Defense, to be addressed.

#### Research Questions

- How many SOF operators have taken a DLPT?
- What problems did SOF operators experience during DLPT testing?

#### Main Findings

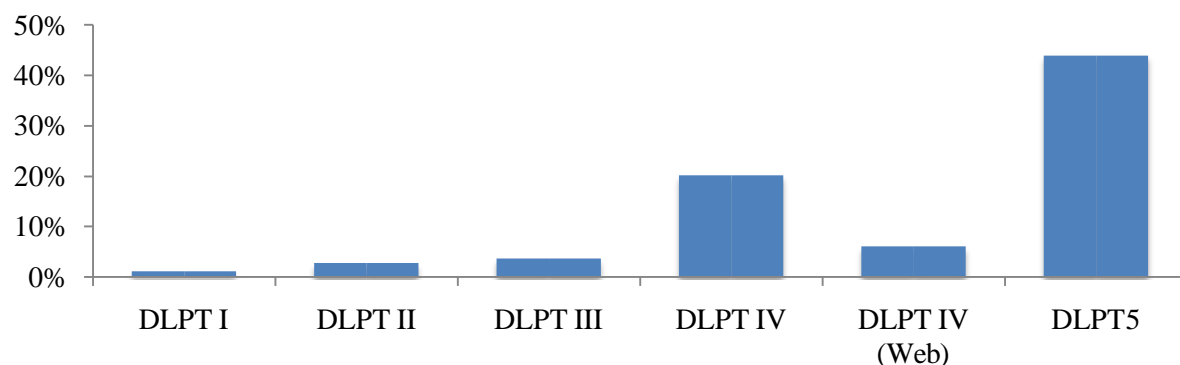
Nearly all SOF operators have taken a DLPT (93%,  $n = 1,086$ ) with 44% ( $n = 468$ ) reporting problems. Forty-four percent of SOF operators report the DLPT5 as their most recent DLPT test version. The most commonly reported problems included computer/technical issues (24%,  $n = 257$ ) and test scheduling delays (22%,  $n = 235$ ). Few SOF operators reported problems accessing testing centers (10%,  $n = 107$ ), receiving feedback on their score (8%,  $n = 88$ ), disruptions while testing (8%,  $n = 85$ ), or “other” problems (5%,  $n = 48$ ).

#### Detailed Findings

##### *SOF Operator DLPT Testing Background*

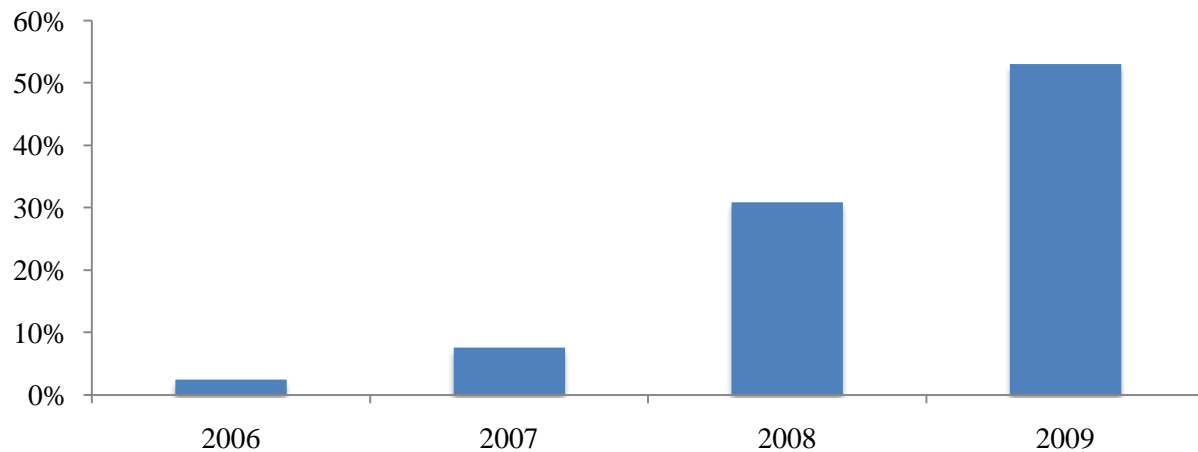
Most SOF operators have DLPT testing experience (93%,  $n = 1,086$ ), with many testing on the most current form (DLPT5: 44%,  $n = 467$ ; Figure 7, p. 13) within the year prior to the survey (2009: 53%,  $n = 558$ ; Figure 8, p. 14).<sup>13</sup>

Figure 7. SOF operators’ most recent DLPT version



Note. SOF Operators:  $n = 1,064$ . Figure does not include SOF operators who did not know which version they last took (22%).

<sup>13</sup> The remaining sections of this report only include responses from SOF operators who have taken a DLPT.

*Figure 8. Date of SOF operators' most recent DLPT*

*Note.* SOF Operators:  $n = 1,053$ . Figure does not include SOF operators who last tested prior to 2006 (6%).

### *Problems Experienced During DLPT Testing*

While slightly over half of SOF operators have not encountered problems during DLPT testing (56%,  $n = 603$ ), a large enough portion have (44%,  $n = 468$ ) to justify immediate attention to address the most common problems reported by survey respondents (Table 1, p. 15) and focus group participants (Table 2, p. 15). SOF operators who experienced problems (44%,  $n = 468$ ) most often encountered computer/technical issues (24%,  $n = 257$ ) and test scheduling issues (22%,  $n = 235$ ; Table 1, p. 15). Some SOF operators reported additional problems during testing, including problems accessing testing centers (10%,  $n = 107$ ), delays/problems receiving feedback on their score (8%,  $n = 88$ ), and disruptions while testing (8%,  $n = 85$ ; Table 1, p. 15). A few SOF operators reported “other” problems (5%,  $n = 48$ ), such as problems with the test content, format or protocol (2%,  $n = 17$ ); poor audio quality (1%,  $n = 8$ ); and testing environment problems (1%,  $n = 8$ ; Table 1, p. 15).

Table 1. Problems experienced during DLPT testing

Reported Testing Problems	Percentage of Total Responses
None	56%
Computer/technical issues	24%
Test scheduling delays	22%
Problems accessing testing centers	10%
Delays/problems receiving feedback on your score	8%
Disruptions while taking test	8%
Other	5%
“Other” Themes	Percentage of Total Responses
<i>Test content/format/protocol problems</i>	2%
<i>Poor audio quality</i>	1%
<i>Testing environment problems</i>	1%
<i>DLPT is not job relevant</i>	< 1%
<i>Not able to prepare for the test</i>	< 1%
<i>General negative</i>	< 1%
<i>Scheduling conflicts</i>	< 1%
<i>Scoring system is not fair/accurate</i>	< 1%
<b>Total SOF Operators who Responded to These Items</b>	<b>1,071</b>

Note. Testing problems presented in italics were coded from responses to the “other” response category. Percentages may not sum to 100% as respondents could select or comment on more than one problem.

Table 2. Focus group themes

Testing Issues (Administrative)	Number of Segments
Computer-technical issues	6
Disruptions while taking the test	2
Issues receiving test results	1
Difficulty scheduling test	0

SOF operators’ comments expand upon the problems they experienced during DLPT testing (Table 3, p. 16). The most frequently elaborated upon comment involved technical problems, scheduling problems, and test content/format/protocol.



Table 3. Elaborations of problems during DLPT testing

Themes	Percentage of Total Comments
Test content/format/protocol is bad/not appropriate	17%
Technical problems	16%
Scheduling conflicts	14%
DLPT is not an accurate assessment	10%
Testing environment problems	8%
DLPT is not job relevant	8%
Leadership/policy problems related to DLPT testing	6%
DLPT is too difficult	6%
General negative	5%
Training does not match what is tested on the DLPT	5%
Delays getting scores	3%
Not receiving test feedback for improvement	1%
Test content/format/protocol is good/appropriate	1%
<b>Total Comments</b>	<b>143</b>

*Note.* Percentages may not sum to 100% as respondents could comment on more than one topic. See Appendix J for definitions and example comments for each theme. Table does not include comments coded as “none/na/not relevant response” (22%).

Commonly mentioned problems with the test content, format and protocol included perceptions that the test’s questions and/or response options were too subjective, unclear and confusing questions, test length, and problems understanding the English (rather than the target language) used on the test:

*“The problem with the DLPT5 is not with the Arabic passages, it is with the English questions. I am a native English speaker with a college degree and I did not understand what the questions were asking me in English.”*

SOF Operator, 5<sup>th</sup> SFG

The technical problems SOF operators experienced often resulted from computers shutting down or freezing up, equipment malfunctions, or poor audio quality for the listening samples:

*“Also I want to say the computers itself, [...] probably broke down six times [...]. I don’t know what happened, if it was just an issue or something was going on at the time.”*

Naval Special Warfare Command (WARCOM) Focus Group

*“THE VOLUME WAS NOT ADJUSTABLE AND MY HEADPHONES DID NOT WORK! I COULD NOT HEAR THE SCENARIOS.”*

SOF Operator, 4<sup>th</sup> Military Information Support Group (MISG)<sup>14</sup>

The scheduling conflicts SOF operators encountered included limited availability of testing locations, problems with the testing centers and staff, and difficulty scheduling testing due to other requirements:

<sup>14</sup> Formerly 4<sup>th</sup> Psychological Operations Group (POG).

*“There is a back log at Ft. Bragg to take the DLPT. This is an issue because you are required to schedule a test at least 4 months in advance. In which time there may other requirements and the soldier might require to fill therefore not being able to take the test.”*

SOF Operator, 7<sup>th</sup> SFG

*“At Fort Lewis, we have experienced testing center contractor issues, where soldiers have shown up for their respective, assigned tests, and have been told that they have been dropped because the contracted staff are on strike/unavailable/dearth/etc.”*

SOF Operator, 1<sup>st</sup> SFG

Of the remaining comment themes, some were related to the accuracy or validity of the DLPT. For example 10% of the comments made indicated that the DLPT is not an accurate assessment, while 8% of the comments indicated that the DLPT is not job-related.

*“I always say you can probably score an high score on the DLPT but would that make you more effected on the mission I don't think so, the DLPT should be graded and also pay by the skills that the individuals have in speaking the language not on what he scores on the test, because lots of SM score very good on this test and doesn't even know how to speak the language at all so with this being say how that person can help on the mission.”*

SOF Operator, 4<sup>th</sup> MISG

An additional 8% of the comments were related to problems in the testing environment, while 6% identified leadership/policy problems related to testing.

*“Poor Testing environment with no AC in the spring or summer”*

SOF Operator, 95<sup>th</sup> CA Bde

A small percentage (4%) were related to getting feedback either through receipt of scores in a timely manner (3%) or related to improvements in future testing (1%). Finally, only one SOF operator commented positively on DLPT testing, mentioning that the test content, format, and protocol were good.

## SECTION IV: PERCEPTIONS OF DLPT ACCURACY AND JOB-RELATEDNESS

This section describes SOF operator and leader perceptions of the DLPT, particularly perceptions of its job-relatedness and accuracy.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, this section presents comments from survey respondents and focus group participants on general feedback related to the DLPT.<sup>16</sup> Since DLPT test development and test administration are on-going processes, this feedback can be used by the Defense Language Institute to improve future test administrations and test versions.

### Research Questions

- Do SOF operators and leaders perceive the DLPT as a job-related and accurate assessment?
- What feedback do survey respondents and focus group participants have related to DLPT testing?

### Main Findings

SOF operators and leaders do not view the DLPT as a job-related and accurate assessment (Figures 9-10, pp. 19). They believe that the DLPT does not cover all the language tasks SOF operators need to perform when deployed (Figure 11, p. 20).

Comments from survey and focus group participants highlighted several problems with the DLPT. Some of the most common problems from survey respondents were that the DLPT: (1) is not job-related (24%,  $n = 114$ ); (2) lacks a speaking component (13%,  $n = 63$ ); (3) has bad or inappropriate content, format, and protocol (12%,  $n = 57$ ); and (4) is not a good measure of language proficiency (10%,  $n = 46$ ; Table 6, p. 24). Focus group participants commented on similar issues (Table 5, p. 23).

Overall, findings suggest the DLPT is an inappropriate test for SOF due to its limited job-relatedness and accuracy. Moreover, this supports USSOCOM's recent policy decision to move to a test that assesses speaking and listening proficiency, the two skill OPI.<sup>17</sup>

### Detailed Findings

#### *DLPT's Job-Relatedness*

SOF operators and leaders do not view the DLPT as job-related. The majority of both groups reported that it was *not related* or only *slightly related* to what SOF operators do on the job (Figure 9, p. 19), with SOF operators ( $M = 2.3$ ) reporting significantly lower levels of job-relatedness than SOF leaders ( $M = 2.6$ ). SOF operators ( $M = 2.4$ ) and leaders ( $M = 2.3$ ) also *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that the content of the DLPT is related to what SOF operators do during deployment (Figure 10, p. 19). In addition, most

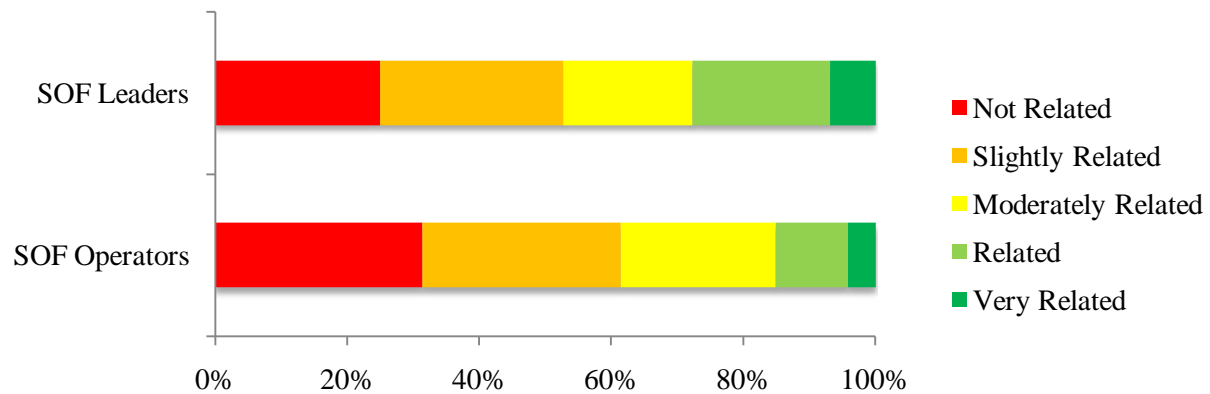
<sup>15</sup> See Appendices D-H for additional SOF operator and leader results by component and SOF type, as well as for MI linguists and 09L assigned or attached to SOF units, students currently in the SOF pipeline, and CLPMs.

<sup>16</sup> See Appendix J for open-ended comment theme definitions and example comments.

<sup>17</sup> See *Oral Proficiency Interview* Technical Report #2010011006 for additional findings related to SOF operator and leader reactions to USSOCOM's recent standard change.

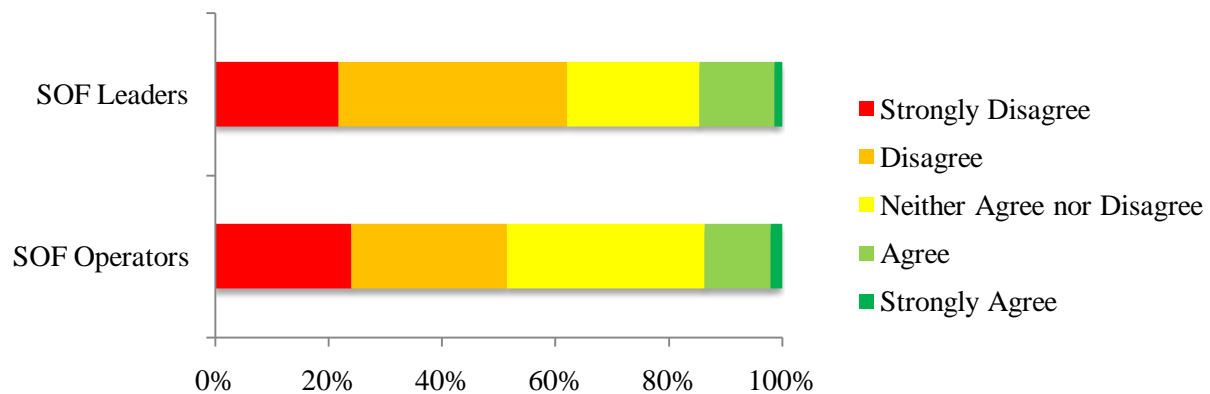
SOF operators and leaders *agree* or *strongly agree* that the DLPT does not cover all the language tasks SOF operators need to perform when deployed (Figure 11, p. 20). SOF leaders ( $M = 4.1$ ) reported a significantly greater level of agreement with this item than did SOF operators ( $M = 3.7$ ).

Figure 9. DLPT's relatedness to what SOF operators do on the job



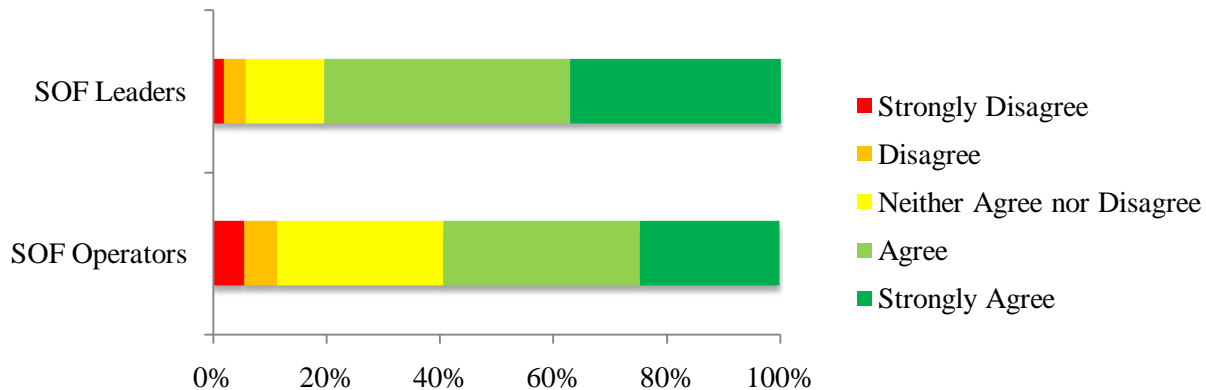
Note. SOF Leaders:  $n = 368$ ; SOF Operators:  $n = 1,058$ . See Appendices D and E for additional results.

Figure 10. The content of the DLPT is clearly related to what SOF operators do during deployment



Note. SOF Leaders:  $n = 363$ ; SOF Operators:  $n = 1,036$ . See Appendices D and E for additional results.

Figure 11. Language tasks not covered by the DLPT



Note. SOF Leaders:  $n = 363$ ; SOF Operators:  $n = 1,036$ . See Appendices D and E for additional results.

In the previous SOF language needs assessment, the DLPT's lack of job-relatedness was identified as a major issue (Surface, Poncheri, Lemmond & Shetye, 2005). Despite developing a new version, issues of the DLPT's job-relatedness still exist. There were no significant differences for operators who most recently tested on the DLPT IV versus DLPT5. Both groups indicated the DLPT was not job-related and did not cover all the language tasks needed while deployed. SOF operators and leaders still do not think the DLPT is job-related for most SOF.

In addition to SOF operators evaluating the DLPT's job-relatedness, Military Intelligence (MI) linguists and 09Ls assigned or attached to SOF units evaluated how related the DLPT in terms of job-relatedness. While they provided slightly higher ratings of the DLPT's job-relatedness than SOF operators, they still indicated that the test neither relates to what they do during deployments nor covers all the language tasks they need to do when deployed (Appendix G).

*"DLPT does not measure in any way the skills that MI soldiers need to conduct their strategic or tactical mission."*

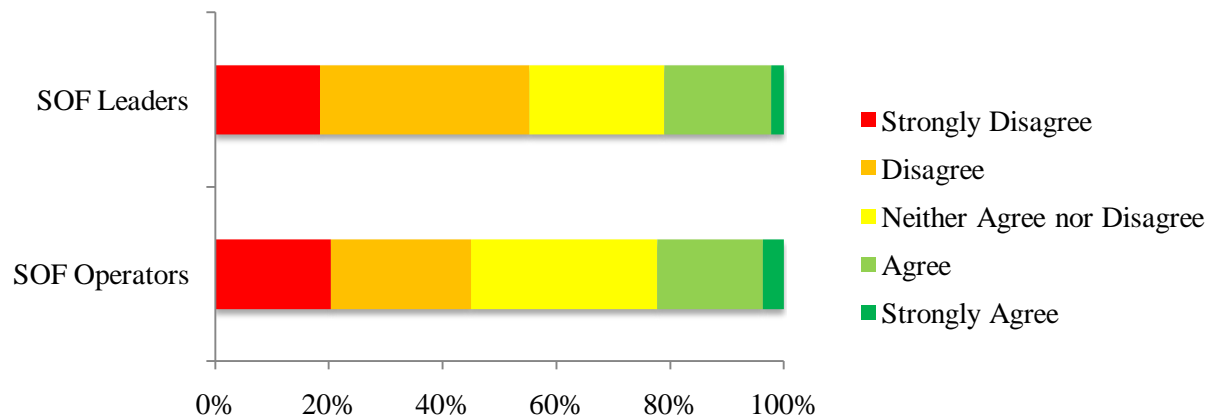
MI Linguist or 09L attached to a SOF unit, 1<sup>st</sup> SFG

#### DLPT's Accuracy

Similar to their job-relatedness perceptions, SOF operators and leaders do not believe the DLPT is an accurate assessment. Many *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that SOF operators' DLPT ratings accurately reflect their ability to use the language while on the job (SOF Operators:  $M = 2.6$ ; SOF Leaders:  $M = 2.5$ ; Figure 12, p. 21). SOF operators and leaders also *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that SOF operators' DLPT ratings accurately reflect their ability to perform job/mission-related tasks in the target language (SOF Operators:  $M = 2.6$ ; SOF Leaders:  $M = 2.6$ ; Figure 13, p. 21). However, 34% ( $n = 351$ ) of SOF operators and 55% ( $n = 200$ ) of SOF leaders *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that SOF operators who perform well on the DLPT are more likely to successfully use language in the field than those who perform poorly on it (Figure 14, p. 22). For this item, SOF leaders ( $M = 3.4$ ) reported significantly greater agreement than did SOF operators ( $M = 3.0$ ).

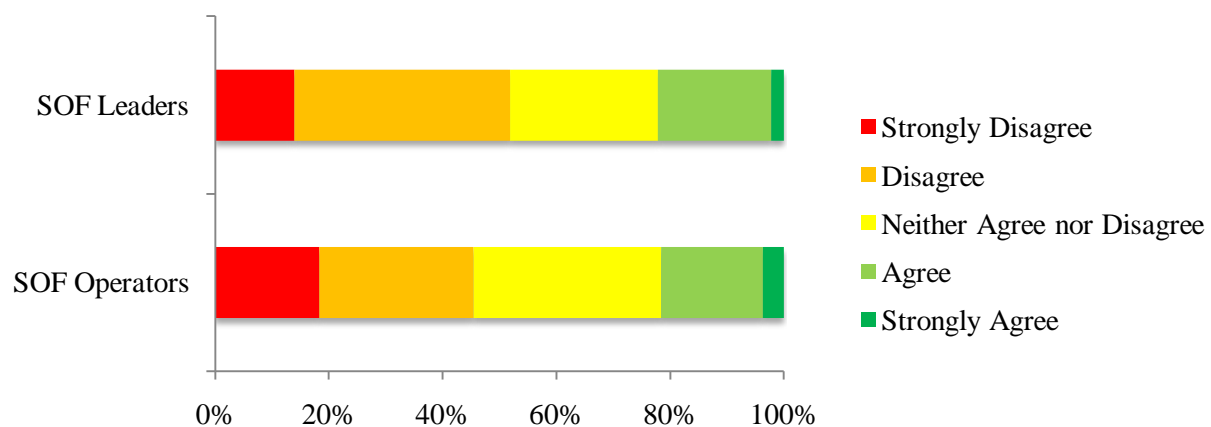
Moreover, some SOF operators and leaders who commented specifically on the DLPT5 indicated that it was not an accurate assessment of language proficiency (5.7%) and that it lacks mission relatedness (2.5%). This suggests that the most recent version of the DLPT still lacks fundamental components needed by the SOF community.

Figure 12. SOF operators' DLPT ratings accurately reflect their ability to use the language on the job



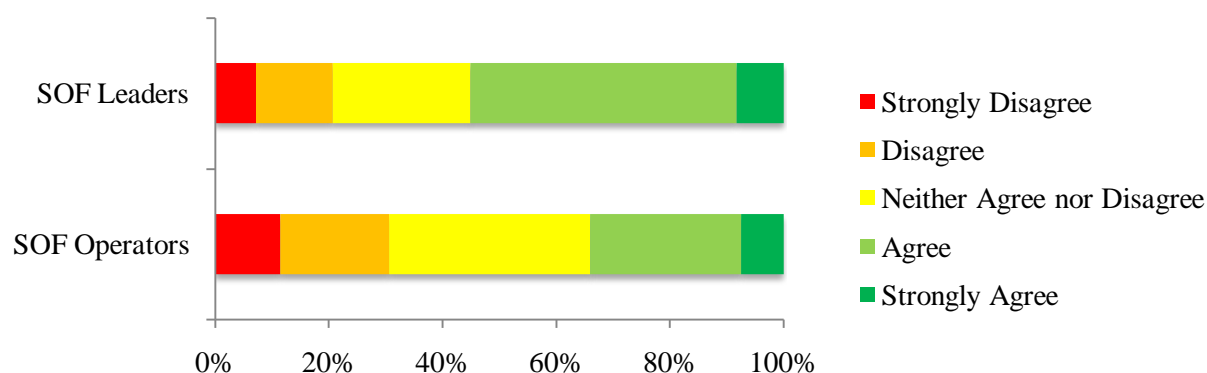
Note. SOF Leaders:  $n = 362$ ; SOF Operators:  $n = 1,037$ . See Appendices D and E for additional results.

Figure 13. SOF operators' DLPT ratings accurately reflect their ability to do job/mission-related tasks in the target language



Note. SOF Leaders:  $n = 361$ ; SOF Operators:  $n = 1,036$ . See Appendices D and E for additional results.

Figure 14. DLPT related to SOF operators field performance



Note. SOF Leaders:  $n = 368$ ; SOF Operators:  $n = 1,058$ . See Appendices D and E for additional results.

Similar to job-relatedness, perceptions of DLPT accuracy have not improved with the DLPT5. In fact, perceptions have gotten more negative. SOF operators, regardless of version (DLPT IV or DLPT5), indicated that the DLPT is not an accurate assessment; however, SOF operators who last tested on the DLPT IV viewed the DLPT as slightly more accurate than those who last took the DLPT5 (Table 4, p. 22).

Table 4. SOF operators' DLPT accuracy perceptions by most recent version

	Last took DLPT IV		Last took DLPT5	
	N	Mean	N	Mean
My DLPT ratings accurately reflect my ability to use language while on the job.	211	2.7	452	2.5
My DLPT ratings are an accurate reflection of my ability to perform job/mission-related tasks in the target language.	211	2.8	450	2.5
SOF operators who perform well on the DLPT are more likely to successfully use language in the field than those who perform poorly on the DLPT.	211	3.1	449	2.9

Note. The scale for the first item is: 1 = *Not Related*, 2 = *Slightly Related*, 3 = *Moderately Related*, 4 = *Related*, 5 = *Very Related*. The scale for the last two items is: 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, 4 = *Agree*, 5 = *Strongly Agree*.

As with their perceptions of the DLPT's job-relatedness, MI linguists and 09Ls assigned or attached to SOF units reported slightly higher ratings than SOF operators concerning the DLPT's accuracy. However, many still *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed* that it accurately reflected their ability to use their target language on the job (Appendix G).

*“While DLPT5 is extremely challenging, the Ph.Ds who designed it need to tailor it to those who are taking it. A Mobile Training Team came to us at Fort Meade and explained that the designers suggest getting GRE level vocabulary preparatory materials (in English) to prepare for the test. This is ridiculous. Many of those who are going through DLI are right out of high school; at best, they may have taken the SATs. Either they need to make more levels of test available (maybe lower, intermediate, upper) or make it more reasonable for a wider audience.”*

MI Linguist or 09L, Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC)

### *Survey and Focus Group Comments*

SOF operators and leaders provided additional feedback on the DLPT during focus groups (Table 5, p. 23) and through survey comments (Table 6, p. 24).<sup>18</sup> Overall, the majority of survey comments (79%) were negative in nature (Table 6, p. 24), while 7% were positive.<sup>19</sup> The most frequently occurring themes focused on negative reactions to the DLPT: not being job relevant; not being an accurate assessment of language proficiency; not including a speaking component; including bad or inappropriate test content or format; and being too difficult. Example comments from survey respondents and focus group participants are provided below common themes.

*Table 5. Focus group participants’ DLPT feedback*

Theme	Number of Segments	
	DLPT (General)	DLPT5
DLPT is a poor indicator of proficiency	34	13
DLPT content is unrelated to mission/job/military	38	8
DLPT is too difficult	13	13
Other negative DLPT comments	16	3
Other positive DLPT comments	7	1

*Note.* Focus group segments coded “DLPT (General)” either mentioned other versions of the DLPT than the DLPT5 or did not specify a version. Focus group segments coded “DLPT5” specifically mentioned the DLPT5.

<sup>18</sup> Focus group segments and survey comments were separated according to whether the DLPT5 was specifically mentioned (Appendix I, Table 1, p. 56) or whether it was a generic comment about the DLPT (Appendix I, Table 2, p. 57).

<sup>19</sup> Percentages may not add to 100% as 18% of comments were coded as N/A and 6% of comments were coded as both positive and negative toward the DLPT.



Table 6. Survey respondents' DLPT feedback

Theme	Percentage of Total Comments		
	SOF Operators	SOF Leaders	Combined
<b><i>Negative Comments</i></b>			
DLPT content is unrelated to mission/job/military	23.4%	25.4%	24.2%
DLPT is not an accurate/valid assessment	15.6%	19.0%	17.0%
Needs to include a speaking component	12.0%	15.3%	13.4%
Test content/format/protocol is bad/not appropriate	9.9%	15.3%	12.1%
DLPT is too difficult	7.8%	10.6%	8.9%
Leadership/policy problems related to DLPT testing	6.0%	12.2%	8.5%
Needs to cover more military-specific topics	7.8%	8.5%	8.1%
General negative	3.5%	10.6%	6.4%
Training does not match what is tested on the DLPT	4.3%	3.7%	4.0%
Not able to prepare for the test	1.1%	2.1%	1.5%
<b><i>Positive Comment</i></b>			
DLPT is an accurate/valid assessment	3.2%	6.3%	4.5%
General positive	0.7%	2.1%	1.3%
Test content/format/protocol is good/appropriate	0.7%	1.6%	1.1%
Training matches what is tested on the DLPT	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%
DLPT content is related to mission/job/military	-	0.5%	0.2%
<b>Total Comments</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>471</b>

*Note.* See Appendix J for definitions and example comments for each theme. Comments for “None/NA/not relevant response” were not included in this table. Comments coded “DLPT (General)” either mentioned other versions of the DLPT than the DLPT5 or did not specify a version. Comments coded “DLPT5” mentioned the DLPT5. Percents may not add to 100% since some respondents may have made both positive and negative statements in a single comment.

One of the most common themes was that the DLPT is unrelated to what SOF operators do while deployed:

*“regarding the German DLPT, the questions/answers have almost nothing to do with the role language proficiency plays in our SOF operations/training.”*

SOF Leader, 10<sup>th</sup> SFG

*“it is not what SOF soldiers need to be effective on the modern battle field. reading and writing have nothing to do with what I have done on 4 deployments”*

SOF Operator, 5<sup>th</sup> SFG

Survey respondents and focus group participants also mentioned that they do not believe the DLPT is an accurate assessment of language proficiency:

*“I do not feel the DLPT V is an accurate assessment of the language ability of the test taker, it seems to test subjectively instead of objectively. / Questions ask about “how does the author/speaker feel” instead of what the author/speaker is writing / Answers to the questions seem to be ambiguous as there appear to be more than one correct option listed as choices”*

SOF Operator, 20<sup>th</sup> SFG

The need for language testing to include a speaking component was also discussed during the focus groups and from survey respondents. Findings establishing a need for speaking in language testing were also found when assessing reactions to USSOCOM’s recent standard change.<sup>20</sup> From these comments, it seems that part of the reason they do not believe the DLPT is related to SOF operators’ job is that they primarily use speaking (or speaking and listening) skills while deployed, but the DLPT only tests reading and listening:

*“I think another thing with the DLPT is that it emphasizes reading a lot, and I think if you’re being realistic about the way we’re going to use language, it should just be listening and speaking.”*

1<sup>st</sup> SFG Focus Group

Survey participants provided negative comments about the DLPT’s content, format, and testing protocol. Specifically, some survey participants mentioned problems associated with the use of English on the test, the test length, and the lack of a non-verbal communication section:

*“It’s a 6-hour test for Arabic. Does it really need to be that long? [...]Is there a way to shorten the test back to the old 2-hour format?”*

SOF Leader,  
United States Army Special Operations Command Headquarters (USASOC HQ)

SOF operators and leaders perceive the DLPT, particularly the DLPT5, as too difficult. Survey respondents and focus group participants mentioned that the test assessed language proficiency at a level too high for most SOF personnel:

*“The DLPT 4 was a fair test or basic language,[...]. The DLPT5 was like taking the SAT in Arabic.”*

SOF Leader, 3<sup>rd</sup> SFG

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<sup>20</sup> Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI; Technical Report #2010011016)

*“DLPT seems to be set at a college level discussion. A large portion focused on politics. The average person dealt with on deployments are not at that level and rarely discuss global warming.”*

SOF Operator, USSOCOM Operational Unit

While most provided negative feedback on the DLPT, some participants made favorable comments during the focus groups and on the survey (Table 5, p. 23). However, they often paired these positive aspects of the DLPT with its limitations:

*“The DLPT accurately measures an operators overall ability in a given language but it does not accurately measure the operator's ability to use the language to accomplish a given military mission down range”*

SOF Leader, 3<sup>rd</sup> SFG

*“I think the reading needs to stay on, as a team sergeant or as a leader, or as whatever, I’m going to be on the internet and I’m going to be getting stuff from the Embassy here; locally I’m going to be getting stuff in the newspaper or something like that. It could be a threat to the rest of my guys, and I’m going to be able to read that.”*

AFSOC Focus Group

## SECTION V: CONCLUSIONS

This report examines perceptions of the DLPT in the Special Operations Forces (SOF) community, specifically SOF leader support of DLPT language testing, SOF operator DLPT testing experiences, and SOF operator and leader views of the DLPT. While USSOCOM recently changed its test of record for language proficiency to the OPI, some components and Services still test on the DLPT. Responses indicate that (1) SOF leaders do not fully support the use of the DLPT for language proficiency testing in the SOF community, (2) almost half of SOF operators reported experiencing scheduling and technical problems during DLPT testing, and (3) SOF operators and leaders indicated that the DLPT does not assess the language proficiency skills needed for missions.

### *SOF Leader Support for DLPT Testing*

As part of their leadership role, SOF leaders should encourage and monitor SOF operator status on meeting USSOCOM language-testing requirements. While USSOCOM recently changed its test of record for language proficiency to the OPI, at the time of this survey, many SOF leaders indicated that their units required SOF operators to test on the DLPT to fulfill language testing requirements. In the future, many SOF operators will continue to test on the DLPT to receive FLPB.

SOF leaders should pay attention to SOF operators' DLPT ratings and encourage them to do well on the test. However, many SOF leaders reported not paying attention to DLPT scores, not believing DLPT ratings are important, and not encouraging SOF operators to stay up-to-date on language testing or do well on the DLPT. Moreover, of SOF leaders in units that require personnel to take the DLPT and who could comment on DLPT testing ( $n = 371$ ), 51% ( $n = 183$ ) indicated their units fell below USSOCOM's requirement of more than 80% of their personnel meeting language testing requirements. Therefore, approximately half of SOF units did not meet USSOCOM's standard and should be following mandated language training programs.<sup>21</sup>

### *SOF Operator Experiences with the DLPT*

During their most recent DLPT, 44% ( $n = 468$ ) of SOF operators reported experiencing problems. The most commonly reported problems included computer/technical issues (24%,  $n = 257$ ) and test scheduling delays (22%,  $n = 235$ ). Computer/technical issues SOF operators experience should be communicated to the Defense Language Institute (DLI) testing authorities since problems may have a negative impact on performance. Specifically, technical issues can impact the reliability and validity of test scores and, in extreme cases, the validity as well. Test scheduling delays should be addressed since they may affect SOF operators' abilities to stay up-to-date on their language testing requirement if they are required to take the DLPT. Although outside the direct control of SOF, SOF leaders can raise these issues with those who have propensity and oversight for testing and test delivery.

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<sup>21</sup> However, these are only SOF leader estimates rather than actual counts. If there is a discrepancy between these estimates and actual counts, the discrepancy suggests that SOF leaders are not paying close attention to SOF operator language test scores.

*Perceptions of DLPT Accuracy and Job-relatedness*

Findings support USSOCOM's recent change from emphasizing reading and listening skills (as measured by the DLPT) to the emphasizing speaking and listening skills (as measured by the OPI). SOF operators and leaders indicated that the DLPT neither relates to their jobs nor accurately assesses language proficiency. They also indicated the DLPT does not cover all the language tasks needed when deployed. Specifically, most SOF operators and leaders reported that the DLPT was *not related* or only *slightly related* to what SOF operators do on the job and *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the DLPT does not cover all the language tasks SOF operators need to perform when deployed. Therefore, the move away from testing on the DLPT to OPI testing supports USSOCOM's goals of emphasizing mission-related language skills.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, recent research sponsored by SOFLO indicates the DLPT listening is not an effective proxy for speaking, which is the desired skill for most SOF.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, this further supports the transition to OPI testing.

Additionally, findings mirror those found during the *2004 SOF Language Transformation Needs Assessment* (Surface, Poncheri, Lemmond & Shetye, 2005). When responding to that survey, SOF operators and leaders indicated that the DLPT did not accurately measure language proficiency or how they use language on missions. Moreover, perceptions have gotten more negative as SOF operators who last tested on the DLPT IV viewed the DLPT as slightly more accurate than those who last took the DLPT5. As in 2004, the findings indicate that the DLPT does not meet the testing needs of the SOF community and does not facilitate the alignment of capability with mission requirements. However, many in SOF will still take the DLPT to qualify for Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB), making these findings problematic for the SOF community and the goal of developing mission-relevant foreign language capability. USSOCOM and SOF component leadership should take steps to address these concerns to better align foreign language proficiency testing with the needs of the SOF community.

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<sup>22</sup> See *Oral Proficiency Interview* (OPI; Technical Report #2010011016) for more information on SOF operator and leader perspectives on the standard change.

<sup>23</sup> *Using the DLPT as a Proxy for the OPI: Are Reading and Non-Participatory Listening Scores a Substitute for Direct Assessment of Speaking Proficiency?* (Technical Report #2010010624)

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### ABOUT SWA CONSULTING INC.

SWA Consulting Inc. (formerly Surface, Ward, and Associates) provides analytics and evidence-based solutions for clients using the principles and methods of industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology. Since 1997, SWA has advised and assisted corporate, non-profit and governmental clients on:

- Training and development
- Performance measurement and management
- Organizational effectiveness
- Test development and validation
- Program/training evaluation
- Work/job analysis
- Needs assessment
- Selection system design
- Study and analysis related to human capital issues
- Metric development and data collection
- Advanced data analysis

One specific practice area is analytics, research, and consulting on foreign language and culture in work contexts. In this area, SWA has conducted numerous projects, including language assessment validation and psychometric research; evaluations of language training, training tools, and job aids; language and culture focused needs assessments and job analysis; and advanced analysis of language research data.

Based in Raleigh, NC, and led by Drs. Eric A. Surface and Stephen J. Ward, SWA now employs close to twenty I/O professionals at the masters and PhD levels. SWA professionals are committed to providing clients the best data and analysis upon which to make evidence-based decisions. Taking a scientist-practitioner perspective, SWA professionals conduct model-based, evidence-driven research and consulting to provide the best answers and solutions to enhance our clients' mission and business objectives. SWA has competencies in measurement, data collection, analytics, data modeling, systematic reviews, validation, and evaluation.

For more information about SWA, our projects, and our capabilities, please visit our website ([www.swa-consulting.com](http://www.swa-consulting.com)) or contact Dr. Eric A. Surface ([esurface@swa-consulting.com](mailto:esurface@swa-consulting.com)) or Dr. Stephen J. Ward ([sward@swa-consulting.com](mailto:sward@swa-consulting.com)).

**The SWA Consulting Inc. team members contributed to this report (listed in alphabetical order):**

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## APPENDIX A: ABOUT THE LCNA PROJECT

In 2003-2004, the Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO) sponsored the *SOF Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project* to inform the development of a language transformation strategy in response to a GAO report (2003). This *SOF Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project* collected current-state information about language usage, proficiency, training, and policy issues (e.g., Foreign Language Proficiency Pay, FLPP) from SOF personnel, SOF unit leaders, and other personnel involved in SOF language. The project used multiple data collection methods and provided the SOFLO with valid data to develop a comprehensive language transformation strategy and advocate for the SOF perspective on language issues within the DoD community.

In a continuing effort to update knowledge of language and culture needs while informing strategic plan development, the SOFLO commissioned the *2009 SOF Language and Culture Needs Assessment Project* (LCNA) to reassess the language and culture landscape across the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and develop a strategy for the next five years. Data were collected between March and November, 2009 from personnel in the SOF community, including SOF operators and leaders. Twenty-three focus groups were conducted between March and June, 2009. A comprehensive, web-based survey for SOF operators and leaders was launched on 26 October and closed on 24 November, 2009.

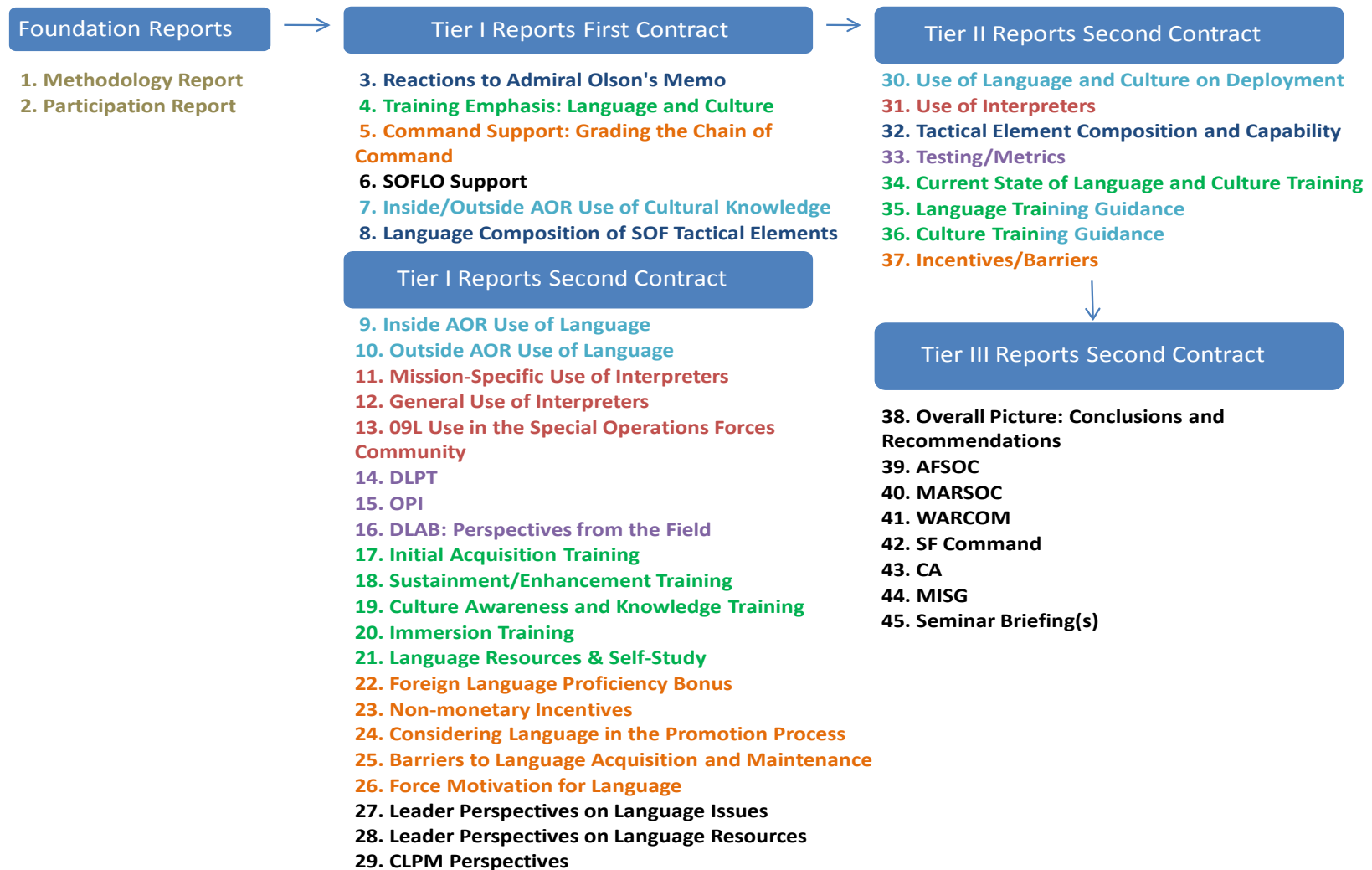
This project's findings will be disseminated through reports and briefings (see Appendix A, Figure 1). Two foundational reports document the methodology and participants associated with this project. The remaining reports are organized in three tiers. Twenty-five *Tier I* reports focus on specific, limited issues (e.g., *Inside AOR Use of Language*). *Tier II* reports integrate and present the most important findings across related *Tier I* reports (e.g., *Use of Language and Culture on Deployment*) while including additional data and analysis on the topic. Most, but not all, *Tier I* reports will roll into *Tier II* reports. One *Tier III* report presents the most important findings, implications, and recommendations across all topics explored in this project. The remaining *Tier III* reports present findings for specific SOF organizations [e.g., Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), Special Forces (SF) Command]. All *Tier III* reports are associated with a briefing. Report topics are determined by the SOFLO and subject to change.

In June, 2009, the GAO reported that the Department of Defense is making progress toward transforming language and regional proficiency capabilities but still does not have a strategic plan in place to continue development that includes actionable goals and objectives. The findings from this study can be used by the SOFLO and leaders at USSOCOM to continue strategic planning and development in this area.

This project design, logistics, data collection, initial analysis and first eight reports of this project were conducted by SWA Consulting Inc. (SWA) under a subcontract with SRC (SR20080668 (K142); Prime # N65236-08-D-6805). The additional reports are funded under a separate contracting vehicle with Gemini Industries Inc. [GEM02-ALMBOS-0018 (10210SWA-1); Prime # USZA22-02-D-0015]. For questions or more information about the SOFLO and this project, please contact Mr. Jack Donnelly ([john.donnely@socom.mil](mailto:john.donnely@socom.mil)). For specific questions related to data collection or reports associated with this project, please contact Dr. Eric A. Surface ([esurface@swa-consulting.com](mailto:esurface@swa-consulting.com)) or Dr. Reanna Poncheri Harman ([rpharman@swa-consulting.com](mailto:rpharman@swa-consulting.com)) with SWA Consulting Inc.



## Appendix A, Figure 1. Report Overview



*Note:* Foundation reports are referenced by every other report. Colors represent *Tier I* reports that roll (integrate) into an associated *Tier II* report. Reports in black are final reports on the topic but may be cited by other reports. *Tier II* reports roll into the *Tier III* reports. All *Tier III* reports include an associated briefing.

## APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY

### Participants

#### *Focus Group*

SOF personnel ( $n = 126$ ) participated in 23 focus groups conducted across the SOF community, including Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC), Naval Special Warfare Command (WARCOM), and United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC).<sup>24</sup> This report includes comments and content (i.e., theme) totals from focus group participants regarding the DLPT.

#### *Survey*

Survey respondents received the SOF operator version of the DLPT items if they indicated one of the following roles:

- SOF Operator
- SOF Operator assigned to other duty
- Currently in the training pipeline for SOF
- MI Linguist or 09L assigned or attached to a SOF unit
- SOF Retirees

Respondents received the SOF leader version of the DLPT and language testing items if they designated one of the following roles:

- SOF Unit Commanders and Unit Leadership of O3 Commands or higher, including Staff, Support, and Specialists
- Command Language Program Manager or Component Language Program Manager (CLPM)
- Language Office Personnel
- Instructor

Throughout this report, “SOF operator” refers to respondents who indicated they were a SOF Operator or a SOF Operator assigned to other duty. The “SOF leader” responses throughout this report only include respondents who indicated they were SOF Unit Commanders and Unit Leadership of O3 Commands or higher.

For comparisons to SOF operators, Appendix E provides responses from “MI Linguist or 09L assigned or attached to SOF unit” and Appendix F provides responses from students currently in a SOF training pipeline. For comparisons to SOF leaders, Appendices H provide CLPM responses.

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<sup>24</sup> See *Participation Report* (Technical Report #2010011003) for participant details. See *Methodology Report* (Technical Report #2010011002) for the focus group interview guide.

This report excluded respondents who indicated they were a SOF retiree, Language Office Personnel, or Instructor.

### *SOF Type Classification*

Appendices G and H present SOF operators and leaders assigned to USASOC according to their SOF type [i.e., Civil Affairs (CA), Military Intelligence Support Group (MISG), and Special Forces (SF)]. This report presents USASOC respondents classified into SOF types based on the following criteria<sup>25</sup>:

- Assigned USASOC unit (e.g., 1<sup>st</sup> SFG classified as SF, 4<sup>th</sup> POG as MISG, 95<sup>th</sup> CA Bde as CA)
- Reported MOS (e.g., 18 series were classified as SF, 37 series as MISG, 38 series as CA)

## **Measures**

### *SOF Operators*

Respondents received 12 closed-ended and 2 open-ended items related to the DLPT if they responded in the affirmative to the following item:

- Have you ever taken the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT)?

Respondents who indicated “Yes” (92.9%,  $n = 1,086$ ) received the DLPT items. Respondents who indicated “No” (7.1%,  $n = 83$ ) were branched to the next survey section. The DLPT items asked if they were currently required to test in an official or required language, when they last took the DLPT, and which version they last took. In addition, the survey asked about any problems experienced during their last testing event, as well as their perceptions of the DLPT’s job-relatedness and accuracy in assessing their language skills.

### *SOF Leaders*

SOF leaders received items related to the DLPT and language testing if they responded in the affirmative to the following item:

- Are personnel in your unit required to take the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT)? (If yes, are you in a position to comment on this?)

Respondents that indicated “Yes, and I am in a position to comment on the DLPT” (48.8%,  $n = 371$ ) received the DLPT and language testing items. Respondents that indicated “Yes, but I am NOT in a position to comment on the DLPT” (40.5%,  $n = 308$ ) or “No, personnel in my unit are not required to take the DLPT” (10.7%,  $n = 81$ ) were branched to the next survey section. The DLPT section included nine

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<sup>25</sup> For further details on participation and attrition rates, please refer to the *Participation Report* (Technical Report #2010011003).

closed-ended items and one open-ended item asking about their experiences with and perceptions of SOF operator DLPT testing. SOF leaders also received two closed-ended items asking about their experiences with official language testing in their units.

## **Analyses**
























































Analysis of all closed-ended items consisted of a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics. Appendices C - H present frequencies and average (i.e., mean) responses for several items. Analysts used inferential statistics (e.g., analysis of variance, *t*-tests) to determine whether significant observed differences existed across groups of participants (e.g., SOF operators v. SOF leaders) that may suggest differences in the broader population of interest.

For qualitative survey data (i.e., open-ended comments), raters created a content code (i.e., theme) list based on available responses for each item. A primary rater then coded each response and a secondary rater coded 30% of the responses. Raters determined the consistency of codes and discussed any disagreements to consensus. This report presents frequencies of occurrence for each theme throughout. Focus group data coding used a similar process.<sup>26</sup> Two different coders from those who coded the survey comments rated the content of each focus group segment. Totals for themes and verbatim comments related to DLPT testing and/or language testing requirements are provided throughout the report.

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<sup>26</sup> For further details on these methods, please refer to the *Methodology Report* (Technical Report #2010011002).

**APPENDIX C: LANGUAGE TESTING REQUIREMENT***Appendix C, Table 1. SOF Leaders: Encouragement of SOF operators to stay up-to-date on the language testing requirement*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
<b>Overall</b>	361	3.95	3% 	7% 	15% 	40% 	34% 
<b>USSOCOM HQ</b>	41	3.61	5% 	15% 	20% 	37% 	24% 
<b>JSOC</b>	1	4.00	0% 	0% 	0% 	100% 	0% 
<b>TSOC</b>	14	3.93	0% 	7% 	29% 	29% 	36% 
<b>Deployed SO Unit</b>	27	4.30	0% 	0% 	15% 	41% 	44% 
<b>AFSOC</b>	2	3.50	0% 	0% 	50% 	50% 	0% 
<b>MARSOC</b>	3	4.00	0% 	0% 	0% 	100% 	0% 
<b>USASOC</b>	266	3.98	3% 	7% 	14% 	40% 	36% 
CA	31	3.90	3% 	6% 	13% 	52% 	26% 
MISG	55	4.15	2% 	2% 	11% 	51% 	35% 
SF	153	4.03	4% 	7% 	13% 	36% 	41% 
























































Note. 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Seldom*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 4 = *Often*, 5 = *Very Often*. Army SOF types did not significantly differ. Differing sample sizes prevented SOF component comparisons. No WARCUM leaders responded to this item.

*Appendix C, Table 2. CLPMs: Encouragement of SOF operators to stay up-to-date on the language testing requirement*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
<b>CLPMs</b>	9	4.67	0% 	0% 	0% 	33% 	67% 






Note. 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Seldom*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 4 = *Often*, 5 = *Very Often*.

Appendix C, Table 3. SOF Leaders: Estimated percentage of SOF operators up-to-date on language testing requirement

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
<b>Overall</b>	356	7.47	8% 	10% 	10% 	23% 	49% 
<b>USSOCOM HQ</b>	39	7.49	15% 	5% 	8% 	15% 	56% 
<b>JSOC</b>	1	4.00	0% 	100% 	0% 	0% 	0% 
<b>TSOC</b>	13	6.85	8% 	15% 	23% 	15% 	38% 
<b>Deployed SO Unit</b>	27	7.19	11% 	7% 	15% 	26% 	41% 
<b>AFSOC</b>	2	2.50	50% 	50% 	0% 	0% 	0% 
<b>MARSOC</b>	3	3.67	0% 	67% 	33% 	0% 	0% 
<b>USASOC</b>	264	7.64	6% 	10% 	10% 	25% 	50% 
<i>CA</i>	30	7.30	7% 	7% 	10% 	43% 	33% 
<i>MISG</i>	55	7.31	2% 	15% 	15% 	29% 	40% 
<i>SF</i>	152	8.14	5% 	7% 	8% 	20% 	61% 





























































Note. 1 = Less than 10%, 2 = 10-20%, 3 = 21-30%, 4 = 31-40%, 5 = 41-50%, 6 = 51-60%, 7 = 61-70%, 8 = 71-80%, 9 = 81-90%, 10 = 91-100%. For the responses frequencies, responses to 1 and 2 were grouped together, 3 and 4 together, 5 and 6 together, 7 and 8 together, and 9 and 10 together. However, means are based on the 1-10 point scale. Army SOF types did not significantly differ. Differing sample sizes prevented SOF component comparisons. No WARCOC leaders responded to this item.

Appendix C, Table 4. CLPMs: Estimated percentage of SOF operators up-to-date on language testing requirement

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
<b>CLPMs</b>	10	6.30	20% 	0% 	20% 	30% 	30% 

Note. 1 = Less than 10%, 2 = 10-20%, 3 = 21-30%, 4 = 31-40%, 5 = 41-50%, 6 = 51-60%, 7 = 61-70%, 8 = 71-80%, 9 = 81-90%, 10 = 91-100%. For the responses frequencies, responses to 1 and 2 were grouped together, 3 and 4 together, 5 and 6 together, 7 and 8 together, and 9 and 10 together. However, means are based on the 1-10 point scale.

**APPENDIX D: DLPT PERCEPTIONS - SOF OPERATORS***Appendix D, Table 1. DLPT's relatedness to what SOF operators do on the job*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Not Related	Slightly Related	Moderately Related	Related	Very Related
<b>Overall</b>	1,058	2.27	31% 	30% 	23% 	11% 	4% 
<b>USSOCOM HQ</b>	113	2.28	28% 	33% 	24% 	12% 	3% 
<b>JSOC</b>	1	1.00	100% 	0% 	0% 	0% 	0% 
<b>TSOC</b>	16	2.13	31% 	25% 	44% 	0% 	0% 
<b>Deployed SO Unit</b>	47	2.15	32% 	34% 	23% 	9% 	2% 
<b>AFSOC</b>	13	2.92	0% 	38% 	31% 	31% 	0% 
<b>WARCOM</b>	6	2.67	0% 	50% 	33% 	17% 	0% 
<b>MARSOC</b>	9	2.56	33% 	11% 	22% 	33% 	0% 
<b>USASOC</b>	782	2.25	33% 	29% 	23% 	11% 	5% 
CA	152	2.74 <sup>x</sup>	22% 	20% 	30% 	18% 	10% 
MISG	157	2.43 <sup>y</sup>	26% 	29% 	27% 	10% 	7% 
SF	466	2.03 <sup>z</sup>	38% 	32% 	19% 	9% 	2% 

*Note.* 1 = *Not Related*, 2 = *Slightly Related*, 3 = *Moderately Related*, 4 = *Related*, 5 = *Very Related*. Army SOF types sharing the same letter (e.g., x or y) did not report significantly different responses. Differing sample sizes prevented SOF component comparisons.

Appendix D, Table 2. The content of the DLPT is clearly related to what SOF operators do during deployment

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall</b>	1,036	2.40	24%	28%	35%	12%	2%
<b>USSOCOM HQ</b>	109	2.57	20%	26%	33%	19%	2%
<b>JSOC</b>	1	3.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
<b>TSOC</b>	15	2.40	27%	13%	53%	7%	0%
<b>Deployed SO Unit</b>	47	2.19	30%	30%	32%	9%	0%
<b>AFSOC</b>	13	3.15	0%	23%	46%	23%	8%
<b>WARCOM</b>	6	2.67	0%	50%	33%	17%	0%
<b>MARSOC</b>	8	2.25	25%	25%	50%	0%	0%
<b>USASOC</b>	768	2.37	25%	28%	34%	10%	2%
<i>CA</i>	149	2.77 <sup>x</sup>	13%	26%	38%	19%	5%
<i>MISG</i>	152	2.49 <sup>x</sup>	19%	27%	41%	12%	1%
<i>SF</i>	460	2.20 <sup>y</sup>	31%	29%	32%	7%	2%

Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Army SOF types sharing the same letter (e.g., x or y) did not report significantly different responses. Differing sample sizes prevented SOF component comparisons.































































Appendix D, Table 3. SOF operators' DLPT ratings accurately reflect their ability to use the language on the job

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall</b>	1,037	2.60	20%	25%	33%	19%	4%
<b>USSOCOM HQ</b>	109	2.68	21%	18%	38%	17%	6%
<b>JSOC</b>	1	3.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
<b>TSOC</b>	15	2.67	7%	40%	33%	20%	0%
<b>Deployed SO Unit</b>	47	2.34	26%	30%	30%	15%	0%
<b>AFSOC</b>	13	3.46	0%	15%	38%	31%	15%
<b>WARCOM</b>	6	3.00	0%	33%	33%	33%	0%
<b>MARSOC</b>	8	2.25	25%	38%	25%	13%	0%
<b>USASOC</b>	769	2.58	21%	25%	33%	18%	4%
CA	149	2.93 <sup>x</sup>	13%	20%	32%	29%	5%
MISG	153	2.65 <sup>xy</sup>	18%	24%	35%	20%	3%
SF	460	2.45 <sup>y</sup>	24%	27%	32%	14%	3%





























































Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Army SOF types sharing the same letter (e.g., x or y) did not report significantly different responses. Differing sample sizes prevented SOF component comparisons.

*Appendix D, Table 4.* SOF operators who score well on the DLPT are more likely to successfully use language in the field than those who score poorly

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall</b>	1,034	2.99	12% 	19% 	35% 	26% 	7% 
<b>USSOCOM HQ</b>	109	3.01	10% 	18% 	39% 	27% 	6% 
<b>JSOC</b>	1	3.00	0% 	0% 	100% 	0% 	0% 
<b>TSOC</b>	15	2.67	20% 	33% 	13% 	27% 	7% 
<b>Deployed SO Unit</b>	47	2.85	13% 	26% 	30% 	28% 	4% 
<b>AFSOC</b>	13	3.39	0% 	15% 	46% 	23% 	15% 
<b>WARCOM</b>	6	3.00	0% 	17% 	67% 	17% 	0% 
<b>MARSOC</b>	7	3.29	14% 	14% 	29% 	14% 	29% 
<b>USASOC</b>	767	2.97	12% 	19% 	35% 	26% 	7% 
CA	148	3.12	9% 	17% 	37% 	26% 	11% 
MISG	153	3.12	10% 	14% 	40% 	28% 	8% 
SF	459	2.88	13% 	22% 	33% 	25% 	6% 





























































*Note.* 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Army SOF types did not significantly differ. Differing sample sizes prevented SOF component comparisons.

Appendix D, Table 5. SOF operators' DLPT ratings accurately reflect their ability to do job/mission-related tasks in the target language

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall</b>	1,036	2.61	18% 	27% 	33% 	18% 	4% 
<b>USSOCOM HQ</b>	109	2.75	14% 	29% 	30% 	21% 	6% 
<b>JSOC</b>	1	2.00	0% 	100% 	0% 	0% 	0% 
<b>TSOC</b>	15	2.60	7% 	47% 	27% 	20% 	0% 
<b>Deployed SO Unit</b>	47	2.40	26% 	28% 	32% 	11% 	4% 
<b>AFSOC</b>	13	3.46	0% 	8% 	54% 	23% 	15% 
<b>WARCOM</b>	6	3.00	0% 	33% 	33% 	33% 	0% 
<b>MARSOC</b>	8	2.38	25% 	25% 	38% 	13% 	0% 
<b>USASOC</b>	768	2.57	20% 	26% 	33% 	17% 	3% 
CA	149	2.85 <sup>x</sup>	15% 	19% 	37% 	23% 	5% 
MISG	153	2.75 <sup>x</sup>	13% 	27% 	36% 	21% 	3% 
SF	459	2.43 <sup>y</sup>	24% 	28% 	31% 	14% 	2% 
























































Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Army SOF types sharing the same letter (e.g., x or y) did not report significantly different responses. Differing sample sizes prevented SOF component comparisons.

Appendix D, Table 6. There are language tasks SOF operators need to do when deployed not covered by the DLPT

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall</b>	1,036	3.67	6% 	6% 	29% 	35% 	25% 
<b>USSOCOM HQ</b>	108	3.73	4% 	6% 	30% 	36% 	25% 
<b>JSOC</b>	1	4.00	0% 	0% 	0% 	100% 	0% 
<b>TSOC</b>	15	3.93	0% 	7% 	20% 	47% 	27% 
<b>Deployed SO Unit</b>	47	3.85	2% 	4% 	32% 	30% 	32% 
<b>AFSOC</b>	13	3.85	0% 	0% 	46% 	23% 	31% 
<b>WARCOM</b>	6	4.17	0% 	0% 	33% 	17% 	50% 
<b>MARSOC</b>	8	3.13	25% 	0% 	38% 	13% 	25% 
<b>USASOC</b>	770	3.62	6% 	6% 	30% 	34% 	23% 
CA	150	3.66	4% 	6% 	33% 	33% 	23% 
MISG	153	3.70	4% 	5% 	32% 	35% 	24% 
SF	460	3.57	8% 	7% 	28% 	34% 	23% 
























































Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Army SOF types did not significantly differ. Differing sample sizes prevented SOF component comparisons.

**APPENDIX E: DLPT PERCEPTIONS - SOF LEADERS***Appendix E, Table 1. DLPT's relatedness to what SOF operators do on the job*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Not Related	Slightly Related	Moderately Related	Related	Very Related
<b>Overall</b>	368	2.57	25% 	28% 	20% 	21% 	7% 
<b>USSOCOM HQ</b>	43	2.35	35% 	21% 	21% 	21% 	2% 
<b>JSOC</b>	1	4.00	0% 	0% 	0% 	100% 	0% 
<b>TSOC</b>	13	2.62	23% 	31% 	15% 	23% 	8% 
<b>Deployed SO Unit</b>	27	2.70	22% 	30% 	19% 	15% 	15% 
<b>AFSOC</b>	2	3.00	50% 	0% 	0% 	0% 	50% 
<b>MARSOC</b>	3	3.00	0% 	0% 	100% 	0% 	0% 
<b>USASOC</b>	272	2.57	25% 	29% 	19% 	21% 	7% 
CA	31	3.39 <sup>x</sup>	3% 	16% 	29% 	42% 	10% 
MISG	57	2.98 <sup>x</sup>	16% 	23% 	21% 	28% 	12% 
SF	156	2.25 <sup>y</sup>	32% 	33% 	16% 	17% 	3% 
























































*Note.* 1 = *Not Related*, 2 = *Slightly Related*, 3 = *Moderately Related*, 4 = *Related*, 5 = *Very Related*. Army SOF types sharing the same letter (e.g., x or y) did not report significantly different responses. Differing sample sizes prevented SOF component comparisons. No WARCOC leaders responded to this item.

Appendix E, Table 2. The content of the DLPT is clearly related to what SOF operators do during deployment

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall</b>	363	2.32	22% 	40% 	23% 	13% 	1% 
<b>USSOCOM HQ</b>	42	2.31	31% 	31% 	17% 	19% 	2% 
<b>JSOC</b>	1	4.00	0% 	0% 	0% 	100% 	0% 
<b>TSOC</b>	14	2.71	14% 	29% 	29% 	29% 	0% 
<b>Deployed SO Unit</b>	26	2.50	12% 	38% 	38% 	12% 	0% 
<b>AFSOC</b>	2	2.00	0% 	100% 	0% 	0% 	0% 
<b>MARSOC</b>	3	3.33	0% 	33% 	0% 	67% 	0% 
<b>USASOC</b>	268	2.25	23% 	43% 	23% 	10% 	1% 
CA	31	2.77 <sup>x</sup>	3% 	39% 	39% 	16% 	3% 
MISG	55	2.60 <sup>x</sup>	9% 	42% 	33% 	13% 	4% 
SF	154	1.99 <sup>y</sup>	32% 	44% 	18% 	6% 	0% 
























































Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Army SOF types sharing the same letter (e.g., x or y) did not report significantly different responses. Differing sample sizes prevented SOF component comparisons. No WARCUM leaders responded to this item.

Appendix E, Table 3. SOF operators' DLPT ratings accurately reflect their ability to use the language on the job

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall</b>	362	2.49	19% 	37% 	24% 	19% 	2% 
<b>USSOCOM HQ</b>	42	2.36	26% 	33% 	21% 	17% 	2% 
<b>JSOC</b>	1	4.00	0% 	0% 	0% 	100% 	0% 
<b>TSOC</b>	14	2.79	7% 	36% 	29% 	29% 	0% 
<b>Deployed SO Unit</b>	26	2.39	15% 	46% 	23% 	15% 	0% 
<b>AFSOC</b>	2	2.00	0% 	100% 	0% 	0% 	0% 
<b>MARSOC</b>	3	2.67	0% 	67% 	0% 	33% 	0% 
<b>USASOC</b>	267	2.48	19% 	36% 	25% 	18% 	2% 
CA	30	2.80	10% 	37% 	20% 	30% 	3% 
MISG	55	2.71	9% 	36% 	33% 	18% 	4% 
SF	154	2.33	25% 	36% 	22% 	16% 	1% 

Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Army SOF types did not significantly differ. Differing sample sizes prevented SOF component comparisons. No WARCOC leaders responded to this item.
























































*Appendix E, Table 4.* SOF operators who score well on the DLPT are more likely to successfully use language in the field than those who score poorly

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall</b>	363	3.36	7% 	13% 	24% 	47% 	8% 
<b>USSOCOM HQ</b>	42	3.31	10% 	12% 	26% 	43% 	10% 
<b>JSOC</b>	1	4.00	0% 	0% 	0% 	100% 	0% 
<b>TSOC</b>	14	3.71	7% 	7% 	7% 	64% 	14% 
<b>Deployed SO Unit</b>	26	3.73	0% 	12% 	8% 	77% 	4% 
<b>AFSOC</b>	2	2.50	0% 	50% 	50% 	0% 	0% 
<b>MARSOC</b>	3	3.67	0% 	0% 	33% 	67% 	0% 
<b>USASOC</b>	268	3.30	7% 	14% 	27% 	44% 	7% 
CA	31	3.45	6% 	16% 	13% 	55% 	10% 
MISG	55	3.44	5% 	11% 	25% 	51% 	7% 
SF	154	3.20	8% 	17% 	30% 	38% 	7% 

*Note.* 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Army SOF types did not significantly differ. Differing sample sizes prevented SOF component comparisons. No WARCUM leaders responded to this item.

















































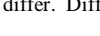








Appendix E, Table 5. SOF operators' DLPT ratings accurately reflect their ability to do job/mission-related tasks in the target language

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall</b>	361	2.59	14% 	38% 	26% 	20% 	2% 
<b>USSOCOM HQ</b>	42	2.31	26% 	36% 	19% 	19% 	0% 
<b>JSOC</b>	1	4.00	0% 	0% 	0% 	100% 	0% 
<b>TSOC</b>	14	2.93	7% 	29% 	29% 	36% 	0% 
<b>Deployed SO Unit</b>	26	2.92	0% 	38% 	38% 	15% 	8% 
<b>AFSOC</b>	2	1.50	50% 	50% 	0% 	0% 	0% 
<b>MARSOC</b>	3	3.00	0% 	33% 	33% 	33% 	0% 
<b>USASOC</b>	266	2.57	14% 	39% 	26% 	19% 	2% 
CA	31	3.00 <sup>x</sup>	10% 	19% 	39% 	26% 	6% 
MISG	55	2.73 <sup>xy</sup>	9% 	35% 	33% 	22% 	2% 
SF	152	2.42 <sup>y</sup>	16% 	46% 	20% 	17% 	1% 






Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Army SOF types sharing the same letter (e.g., x or y) did not report significantly different responses. Differing sample sizes prevented SOF component comparisons. No WARCOT leaders responded to this item.

Appendix E, Table 6. There are language tasks SOF operators need to do when deployed not covered by the DLPT

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Overall</b>	363	4.10	2% 	4% 	14% 	43% 	37% 
<b>USSOCOM HQ</b>	42	4.24	0% 	5% 	17% 	29% 	50% 
<b>JSOC</b>	1	4.00	0% 	0% 	0% 	100% 	0% 
<b>TSOC</b>	14	4.00	7% 	0% 	7% 	57% 	29% 
<b>Deployed SO Unit</b>	26	4.23	0% 	0% 	8% 	62% 	31% 
<b>AFSOC</b>	2	4.50	0% 	0% 	0% 	50% 	50% 
<b>MARSOC</b>	3	3.67	0% 	33% 	0% 	33% 	33% 
<b>USASOC</b>	268	4.07	2% 	4% 	15% 	43% 	36% 
CA	31	3.84	0% 	10% 	16% 	55% 	19% 
MISG	55	4.02	0% 	2% 	25% 	42% 	31% 
SF	154	4.13	3% 	4% 	10% 	42% 	41% 






Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Army SOF types did not significantly differ. Differing sample sizes prevented SOF component comparisons. No WARCOC leaders responded to this item.

**APPENDIX F: DLPT PERCEPTIONS - STUDENTS IN THE SOF TRAINING PIPELINE***Appendix F, Table 1. DLPT's relatedness to what SOF operators do on the job*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Not Related	Slightly Related	Moderately Related	Related	Very Related
Pipeline	27	2.37	33% 	26% 	19% 	15% 	7% 






Note. 1 = Not Related, 2 = Slightly Related, 3 = Moderately Related, 4 = Related, 5 = Very Related.

*Appendix F, Table 2. The content of the DLPT is clearly related to what SOF operators do during deployment*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Pipeline	25	2.80	12% 	20% 	44% 	24% 	0% 






Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

*Appendix F, Table 3. SOF operators' DLPT ratings accurately reflect their ability to use the language on the job*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Pipeline	25	2.84	8% 	32% 	28% 	32% 	0% 






Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

*Appendix F, Table 4. SOF operators who score well on the DLPT are more likely to successfully use language in the field than those who score poorly*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Pipeline	25	3.48	4% 	4% 	36% 	52% 	4% 






Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

*Appendix F, Table 5.* SOF operators' DLPT ratings accurately reflect their ability to do job/mission-related tasks in the target language

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Pipeline	25	2.88	8% 	28% 	32% 	32% 	0% 






Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

*Appendix F, Table 6.* There are language tasks SOF operators need to do when deployed not covered by the DLPT

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Pipeline	25	3.72	4% 	0% 	32% 	48% 	16% 






Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

**APPENDIX G: DLPT PERCEPTIONS - MI LINGUISTS ASSIGNED TO A SOF UNIT***Appendix G, Table 1. DLPT's relatedness to what MI Linguists do on the job*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Not Related	Slightly Related	Moderately Related	Related	Very Related
MI Linguists or 09L	62	2.74	27% 	21% 	15% 	24% 	13% 






Note. 1 = Not Related, 2 = Slightly Related, 3 = Moderately Related, 4 = Related, 5 = Very Related.

*Appendix G, Table 2. The content of the DLPT is clearly related to what MI Linguists do during deployment*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
MI Linguists or 09L	60	2.70	23% 	23% 	18% 	30% 	5% 






Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

*Appendix G, Table 3. MI Linguists' DLPT ratings accurately reflect their ability to use the language on the job*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
MI Linguists or 09L	60	2.88	22% 	20% 	17% 	32% 	10% 






Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

*Appendix G, Table 4. SOF operators who score well on the DLPT are more likely to successfully use language in the field than those who score poorly*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
MI Linguists or 09L	60	3.10	10% 	20% 	27% 	37% 	7% 






Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

*Appendix G, Table 5.* MI Linguists' DLPT ratings accurately reflect their ability to do job/mission-related tasks in the target language

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
MI Linguists or 09L	60	2.88	20% 	22% 	18% 	30% 	10% 






Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

*Appendix G, Table 6.* There are language tasks MI Linguists need to do when deployed not covered by the DLPT

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
MI Linguists or 09L	60	4.00	2% 	7% 	12% 	50% 	30% 






Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

**APPENDIX H: DLPT PERCEPTIONS - CLPMs***Appendix G, Table 1. DLPT's relatedness to what SOF operators do on the job*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Not Related	Slightly Related	Moderately Related	Related	Very Related
CLPMs	10	2.60	30% 	20% 	20% 	20% 	10% 






Note. 1 = Not Related, 2 = Slightly Related, 3 = Moderately Related, 4 = Related, 5 = Very Related.

*Appendix G, Table 2. The content of the DLPT is clearly related to what SOF operators do during deployment*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
CLPMs	10	2.10	30% 	30% 	40% 	0% 	0% 






Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

*Appendix G, Table 3. SOF operators' DLPT ratings accurately reflect their ability to use the language on the job*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
CLPMs	10	2.60	40% 	10% 	0% 	50% 	0% 






Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

*Appendix G, Table 4. SOF operators who score well on the DLPT are more likely to successfully use language in the field than those who score poorly*

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
CLPMs	10	3.00	20% 	20% 	10% 	40% 	10% 






Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

*Appendix G, Table 5.* SOF operators' DLPT ratings accurately reflect their ability to do job/mission-related tasks in the target language

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
CLPMs	9	2.56	33% 	11% 	33% 	11% 	11% 

Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

*Appendix G, Table 6.* There are language tasks SOF operators need to do when deployed not covered by the DLPT

Group	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
CLPMs	9	4.33	0% 	11% 	11% 	11% 	67% 

Note. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.



**APPENDIX I: SURVEY COMMENT TOTALS BY DLPT VERSION**

Appendix I, Table 1. Survey Comment totals - DLPT5 only

Theme	Percentage of Total Comments		
	SOF Operators	SOF Leaders	Combined
DLPT is an accurate/valid assessment	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%
General positive	-	0.5%	0.2%
Test content/format/protocol is good/appropriate	-	0.5%	0.2%
Training matches what is tested on the DLPT	-	-	-
DLPT content is related to mission/job/military	-	0.5%	0.2%
DLPT content is unrelated to mission/job/military	2.5%	2.6%	2.5%
DLPT is not an accurate/valid assessment	5.7%	6.3%	5.9%
Needs to include a speaking component	1.4%	-	0.8%
Test content/format/protocol is bad/not appropriate	1.1%	3.2%	1.9%
DLPT is too difficult	3.5%	5.3%	4.2%
Leadership/policy problems related to DLPT testing	1.8%	1.6%	1.7%
Needs to cover more military-specific topics	0.7%	1.1%	0.8%
General negative	-	1.6%	0.6%
Training does not match what is tested on the DLPT	0.4%	1.1%	0.6%
Not able to prepare for the test	-	-	-
<b>Total Comments</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>471</b>

Appendix I, Table 2. Survey Comment totals – General Responses

Theme	Percentage of Total Comments		
	SOF Operators	SOF Leaders	Combined
DLPT content is unrelated to mission/job/military	20.9%	22.8%	21.7%
DLPT is not an accurate/valid assessment	9.9%	12.7%	11.0%
Needs to include a speaking component	10.6%	15.3%	12.5%
Test content/format/protocol is bad/not appropriate	8.9%	12.2%	10.2%
DLPT is too difficult	4.3%	5.3%	4.7%
Leadership/policy problems related to DLPT testing	4.3%	10.6%	6.8%
Needs to cover more military-specific topics	7.1%	7.4%	7.2%
General negative	3.5%	9.0%	5.7%
Training does not match what is tested on the DLPT	3.9%	2.6%	3.4%
Not able to prepare for the test	1.1%	2.1%	1.5%
DLPT is an accurate/valid assessment	2.1%	5.3%	3.4%
General positive	0.7%	1.6%	1.1%
Test content/format/protocol is good/appropriate	0.7%	1.1%	0.8%
Training matches what is tested on the DLPT	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%
DLPT content is related to mission/job/military	-	-	-
<b>Total Comments</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>471</b>

## APPENDIX J: COMMENT CODE DEFINITIONS

SOF operators and leaders provided comments to the following prompts:

- *Responses for “Other” problems experienced during DLPT testing.*
- *Use the space below to provide any specific feedback that you have related to issues you experienced while taking the DLPT.*
- *Please provide any specific feedback you have related to the DLPT.*

All comments were content analyzed to extract common themes. The resulting themes are provided below by item prompt with a definition and verbatim exemplar comments that illustrate the theme. For more information about this study’s content analysis process, please refer to the *Methodology Report* (Technical Report # 2010011002).

Note: Exemplar comments are presented verbatim and are uncorrected for spelling and other mistakes.

### Responses for “Other” problems experienced during DLPT testing.<sup>27</sup>

- Test content/format/protocol problems
  - Definition: Respondents commented on the test structure, content (e.g., questions, answers), or process.
    - “English answers don't make sense some time”
- Poor audio quality
  - Definition: Respondents commented on audio problems during testing.
    - “hearing the muffled cassette recording”
- Testing environment problems
  - Definition: Respondents commented on testing environment conditions (e.g., temperature, noise) or disruptions.
    - “Poor testing environment with no AC in the spring and summer”
- DLPT is not job relevant
  - Definition: Respondents commented that the DLPT does not relate to what they do on the job or while deployed.
    - “test having no relevancy to what is needed while deployed”
- Not able to prepare for the test
  - Definition: Respondents commented that they were not able to prepare for the DLPT due to other training and/or job requirements.
    - “no prep time”
- General negative
  - Definition: Respondents provided non-favorable and non-specific comments on the DLPT.
    - “DLPT V Sucks.”

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<sup>27</sup> Only SOF operators received this item.

- Scheduling conflicts
  - Definition: Respondents commented that they had difficulty scheduling the DLPT due to other training, other job requirements, and/or limited availability.
    - “OPTEMPO issues”
- Scoring system is not fair/accurate
  - Definition: Respondents commented that they do not believe the DLPT is scored in a fair or accurate way. Also included comments that the score did not accurately reflect their language ability.
    - “DLPT V grading system is unrealistic.”

**Use the space below to provide any specific feedback that you have related to issues you experienced while taking the DLPT.<sup>28</sup>**

- None/NA/not relevant response
  - Definition: Respondents had no comment or made an unrelated comment.
    - “NONE AT THIS TIME”
- Test content/format/protocol is bad/not appropriate
  - Definition: Respondents provided non-favorable comments on the test structure, content (e.g., questions, answers), or process.
    - “Besides the fact that the questions and answers are left open to too much interpretation and you are left guessing what the test writers are trying to say, the tests need to be reviewed by someone not interested in a contract and making money off of the Government. The test is unnecessarily and extremely too long. The questions are not clear and the answers are not obvious, leaving one to have to guess the answer the test is asking for...the questions are often too vague! The use of slang in the target languages and the speakers being of numerous national origins. Spanish is not Spanish is not Spanish - each country has a unique way of speaking and often times the colloquialisms are very different. Portuguese is NOT Portuguese throughout the world either - they are given as different tests and we should be awarded FLPP for each.”
- Test content/format/protocol is good/appropriate
  - Definition: Respondents provided favorable comments on the test structure, content (e.g., questions, answers), or process.
    - “The administrators are professional and always on time to administer the test.”
- Technical problems
  - Definition: Respondents commented on equipment or computer problems they encountered during testing.
    - “The computers would freeze up during the test and you would either have to change computers or reboot the system.”

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<sup>28</sup> Only SOF operators received this item.

- Scheduling conflicts
  - Definition: Respondents commented that they had difficulty scheduling the DLPT due to other training, other job requirements, and/or limited availability.
    - “need more test days or slots on a day to test”
- DLPT is not an accurate assessment
  - Definition: Respondents commented that they do not believe the DLPT is scored in a fair or accurate way. Also included comments that the score did not accurately reflect their language ability.
    - “The MSA DLPT V is not a true measure of a students language proficiency in MSA. I scored a 2+/2+ on the DLPT IV, and retested on the DLPT V two days later, scoring a 0/0.”
- Testing environment problems
  - Definition: Respondents commented on testing environment conditions (e.g., temperature, noise) or disruptions.
    - “too many people in test area....most of them are the test taker...should limit the amount of people. The area was uncomfortable due to the location and temperature”
- DLPT is not job relevant
  - Definition: Respondents commented that the DLPT does not relate to what they do on the job or while deployed.
    - “DLPT does not cover any material which is relevant to my job. The DLPT deals mainly with art and culture, not with military or government situations.”
- Leadership/policy problems related to DLPT testing
  - Definition: Respondents commented on leadership and/or policy issues related to DLPT testing, such as requirements and protecting time to study for and take the test.
    - “There was an issue with scheduling dates to take the DLPT 5 after language immersion instead of before but it was more a command related issue. Additionally there was an issue with getting an un-official score immediately after due to an issue with the contract for the testing administrators.”
- DLPT is too difficult
  - Definition: Respondents commented that the DLPT was too difficult or that it was written for too high of an educational level (e.g., written for college students rather than military personnel).
    - “There is a dramatic difference between the DLPT IV and DLPT V. The DLPT IV is a reasonable standard that the average non-native speaker can master. The DLPT V is a professional level test that requires college level fluency in both the target language and English. There were native speaking language instructors in my school that were unable to correctly answer questions from the DLPT V sample exam. It is that difficult. I don't know why the level of difficulty changed so dramatically, but I believe there must be some motivation for it because a change that drastic is not accidental.”

- General negative
  - Definition: Respondents provided non-favorable and non-specific comments on the DLPT.
    - “the dlpt 5 is crap”
- Training does not match what is tested on the DLPT
  - Definition: Respondents commented that the training they received in either initial acquisition or sustainment/enhancement does not match what is tested on the DLPT.
    - “The DLPT is not relevant to the type of training we do.”
- Delays getting scores
  - Definition: Respondents commented that they experienced delays receiving their DLPT score or that it took too long to receive.
    - “it took 2 1/2 weeks to get my scores.”
- Not receiving test feedback for improvement
  - Definition: Respondents commented that they do not receive feedback on their DLPT performance to use for improvement on their next test.
    - “And the test really doesn't give you any feed back on your answers.”

**Please provide any specific feedback you have related to the DLPT.**

- None/NA/not relevant response
  - Definition: Respondents indicated they had no comment or made an unrelated comment.
    - “nothing to say”
- DLPT content is unrelated to mission/job/military
  - Definition: Respondents commented that the DLPT does not relate to what they do on the job or while deployed.
    - “The DLPT should put more emphasis on military operations and training, politics, and mastery of military terminology. There is not enough "D" in the DLPT. / While I may have had opportunities to talk about a speech given at a university by a poet or a soccer game in the capital city, it has never really been important to mission accomplishment.”
- DLPT content is related to mission/job/military
  - Definition: Respondents commented that the DLPT relates to what they do on the job or while deployed.
    - “There are a lot of proponents for taking the OPI vs DLPT 5 because they state an operator only needs to be able to communicate in the target language to accomplish the mission. I disagree with this way of thinking, and I also believe it can be harmful to the force in the future. [...] the DLPT 5 is a good measure on whether an operator is proficient enough to get along in the target language while on a mission.”
- Needs to include a speaking component
  - Definition: Respondents commented that the DLPT lacks a speaking section or that speaking proficiency needs to be tested.

- “The problem with the testing is that it does not include a speaking portion. To get a better idea of the Soldiers language capability, there should be an interview portion using a native speaker of the tested language.”
- Test content/format/protocol is bad/not appropriate
  - Definition: Respondents provided non-favorable comments on the test structure, content (e.g., questions, answers), or process.
    - “The DLPT for Spanish is a grouping of many dialects as well as a number of radio broadcasts that are difficult for the native and non-native Spanish speaker to grasp in the testing format. E.g. the tester will hear a Uruguan native speaking followed by a Puerto Rican - very different dialects of Spanish with significant differences in idioms. Jumping from one dialect to the next in sequence is very difficult to master - again, both for the native and non-native speaker.”
- Test content/format/protocol is good/appropriate
  - Definition: Respondents provided favorable comments on the test structure, content (e.g., questions, answers), or process.
    - “Informal language is not covered in the Indonesian DLPT, but it changes so frequently that it better to test operators on the ability to use the formal language. The lowest common denominator will always be the formal version of Indonesian.”
- DLPT is not an accurate/valid assessment
  - Definition: Respondents commented that the DLPT does not accurately assess language proficiency or ability to use the language.
    - “Compaired with previous versions of the DLPT I have dramatically lower confidence in the validity of test results in both directions, low scores no longer mean low ability and high scores no longer mean high ability. With out having investigated or tested it my hypothesis is that the DLPT 5 provides more random results”
- DLPT is an accurate/valid assessment
  - Definition: Respondents commented that the DLPT does accurately assess language proficiency or ability to use the language.
    - “DLPT is a good measure of skill”
- DLPT is too difficult
  - Definition: Respondents commented that the DLPT was too difficult or that it was written for too high of an educational level (e.g., written for college students rather than military personnel).
    - “When most instructors have trouble passing a test that most students must prepare for, there's a serious problem. This Level 5 testing has made an SAT type test out of a foreign language test and the NSA calls it fair. It's very unfair to any operator. The older tests weren't ideal either but at least there were those who knew the language well enough who could pass it and get paid. Now, I personally know several former 3/3's who are getting 0+/1 or

1/1 on the level 5 Arabic test. They can speak well and perform their jobs as well as they ever could, but now are not receiving any language pay.”

- Leadership/policy problems related to DLPT testing
  - Definition: Respondents commented on leadership and/or policy issues related to DLPT testing, such as requirements and protecting time to study for and take the test.
    - “nobody cares about it...we test in a language that we do not use....it is like me asking how important speaking norwegian is to you and how much time you have to focus on that language knowing you will never go to norway”
- Needs to cover more military-specific topics
  - Definition: Respondents commented that the DLPT needs to include more military-specific topics and/or scenarios.
    - “I dont think there is one mentioin of any type of military training on the test. [...] We are afterall a military training foreign military units. This issue needs to be fixed to become relevant.”
- General negative
  - Definition: Respondents provided non-favorable and non-specific comments.
    - “The DLPT (V) is the worst test I have ever taken. [...] DLPT IV was a big step in the wrong direction that has resulted in DLPT V. I will not take an annual DLPT again until DLPT V is gone. It is a waste of 5 hours of my life, and it is a waste of the taxpayers money for me to continue to valisate that program indirectly by participating in the test.”
- General positive
  - Definition: Respondents provided favorable and non-specific comments.
    - “The DLPT 5 is probably a better test”
- Training does not match what is tested on the DLPT
  - Definition: Respondents commented that the training they received (e.g., initial acquisition or sustainment/enhancement) does not match what is tested on the DLPT.
    - “I learned language through SOLT. The vast majority of the language from SOLT does not cross over to the DLPT”
- Training matches what is tested on the DLPT
  - Definition: Respondents commented that the training they received (e.g., initial acquisition or sustainment/enhancement) matches what is tested on the DLPT.
    - “The language training matches the DLPT.”
- Not able to prepare for the test
  - Definition: Respondents commented that they were unable to prepare for the DLPT due to other training and/or job requirements.
    - “There is just no time with the optemp to properly study for the DLPT”